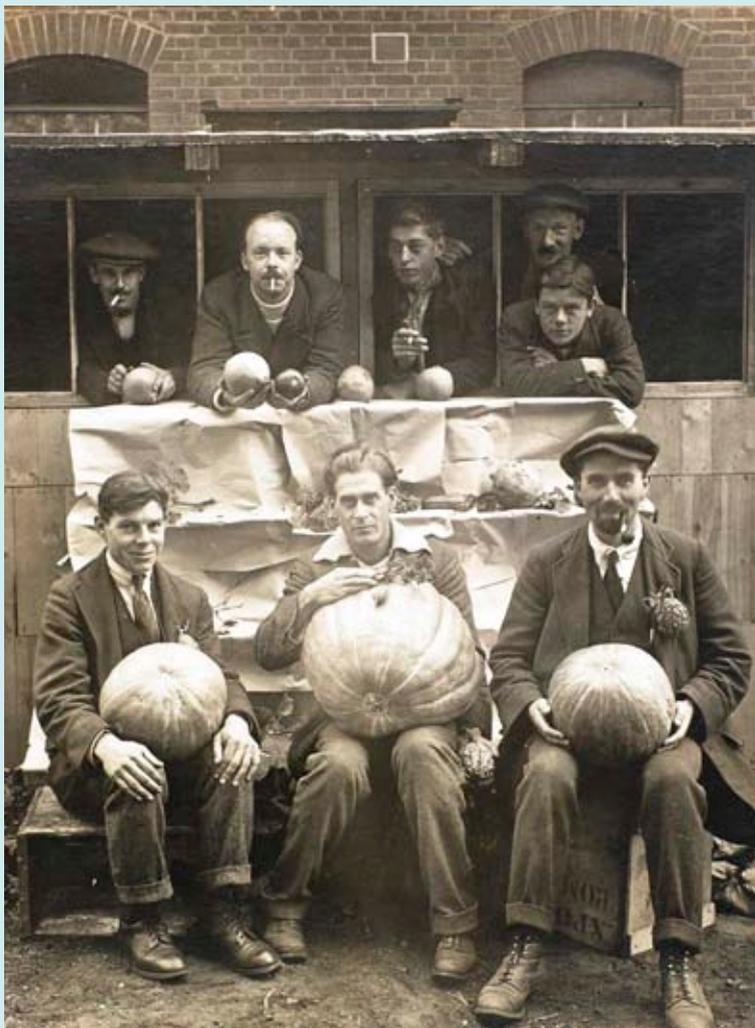


Occasional Papers from
The RHS Lindley Library



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VOLUME TWELVE
SEPTEMBER 2014
Horticulture and the First World War



Cover illustration:

Postcard of inmates with pumpkins and gourds
at Ruhleben Horticultural Society.

Occasional Papers from the RHS Lindley Library

Editor: Dr Brent Elliott

Production & layout: Richard Sanford

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Occasional Papers
from the
RHS Lindley Library

Volume Twelve

September 2014

Horticulture and the First World War

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A horticultural satire on the German war

BRENT ELLIOTT

c/o The Lindley Library, the Royal Horticultural Society, London

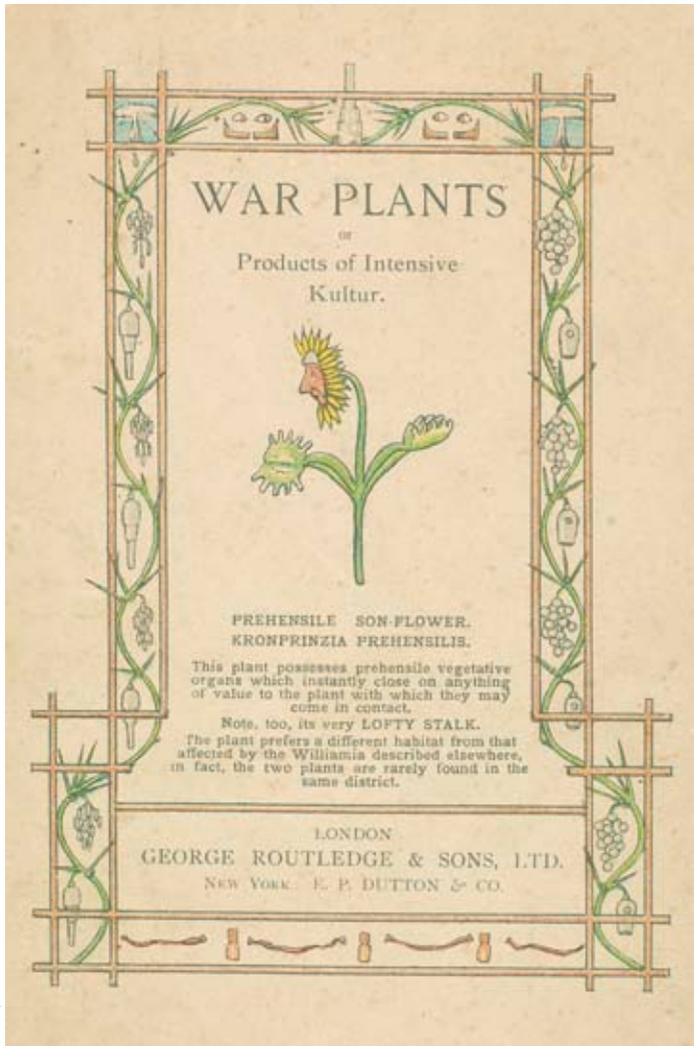
In 1915 there appeared a little book of cartoons with a horticultural theme: *War Plants or Products of Intensive Kultur*, by Claude C. H. Woodhouse. This work is little known and has never been reprinted to my knowledge.

Not much is known about Claude Henry Chaloner Woodhouse. Born in 1869, the son of a general practitioner, he was educated at Westminster School, University College, and the Royal School of Mines. He was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

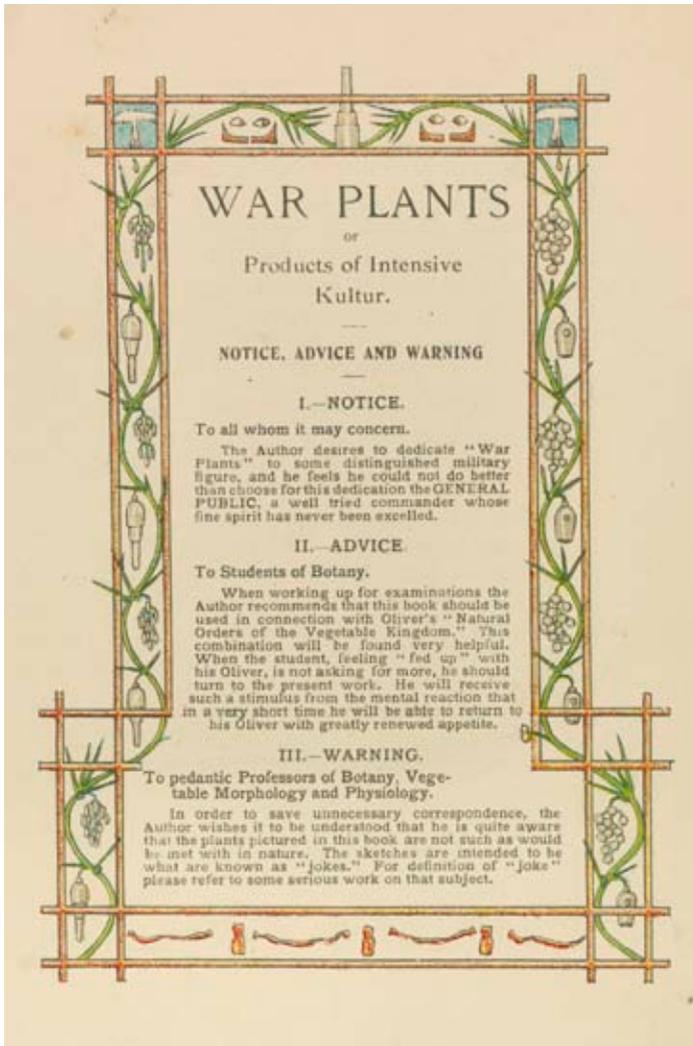
At some point in the 1890s Woodhouse began to take his vacations in Bordighera, where he eventually settled, in a house named “Villa Agincourt”. Bordighera in the 1890s was virtually an expatriate English colony, English residents or regular visitors outnumbering the local population. In 1898, Woodhouse, with a colleague named Granville H. Baillie (presumably the Granville Hugh Baillie, 1873–1951, who later became known for his history of watches), formed a company called the Riviera Electric Supply Company. In 1901 they received a royal warrant to build a tramway from Bordighera to Ventimiglia (a proposed later extension to Mentone was never completed). The *Tramvia Ventimiglia-Bordighera* remained functional for three decades, but was finally closed in 1936.

Woodhouse died in 1934, at his villa in Bordighera. I have been unable to find anything about his horticultural activities. The principal British horticultural figure at Bordighera in his time was Clarence Bicknell, the author of *Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Riviera* (1885) and of a *Flora of Bordighera and San Remo* (1896); but Woodhouse’s name does not appear in Bicknell’s visitors’ book (available online at www.marcusbicknell.co.uk/ clarence), and I have not traced any contact between them.

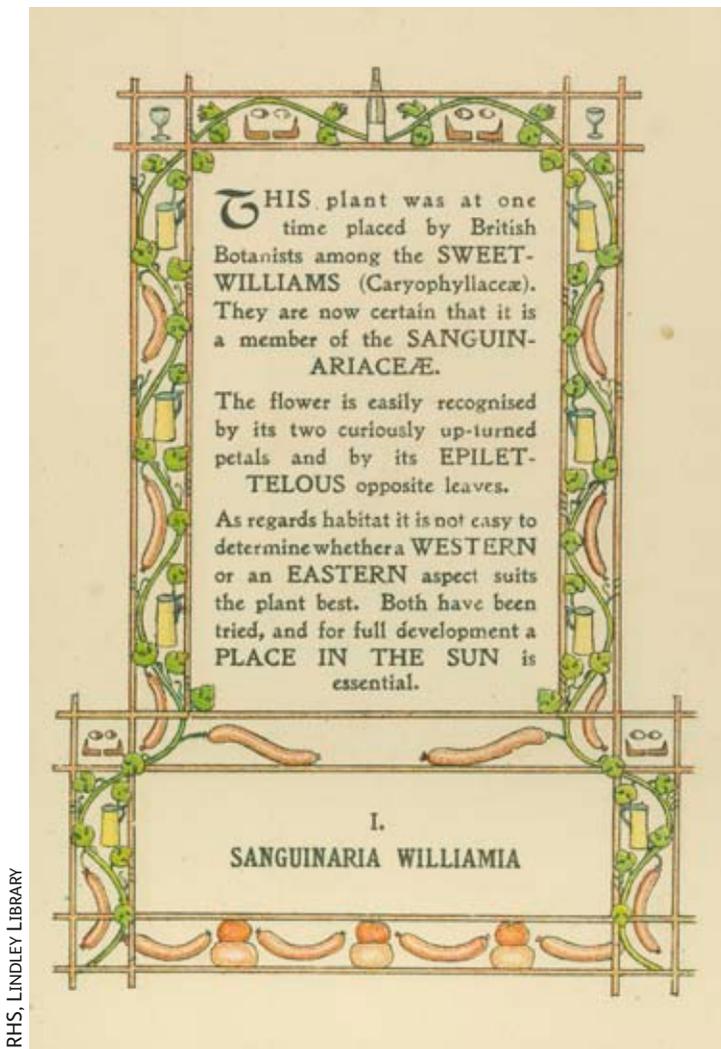
Woodhouse’s little book of cartoons was published when the war had been going for over half a year. In the following pages, it is reproduced in its entirety, with some explanatory comments at the base of the pages and in additional notes at the end. Gardeners will find the horticultural comments superfluous, but might well need the period political references explained. For aficionados of the First World War, most of the comments about the wartime events and the German cultural background pilloried in the cartoons will be familiar, but the horticultural content may not.



Cover. Prehensile son-flower – *Kronprinzia prehensilis*. Son-flower, because the Crown Prince was the son of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Drawn to resemble a sundew, to show how sticky he was. Prehensilis, to suggest clinging to the throne. “Rarely found in the same district”, because the Kaiser was known to detest his son, mainly because of his affairs with women.



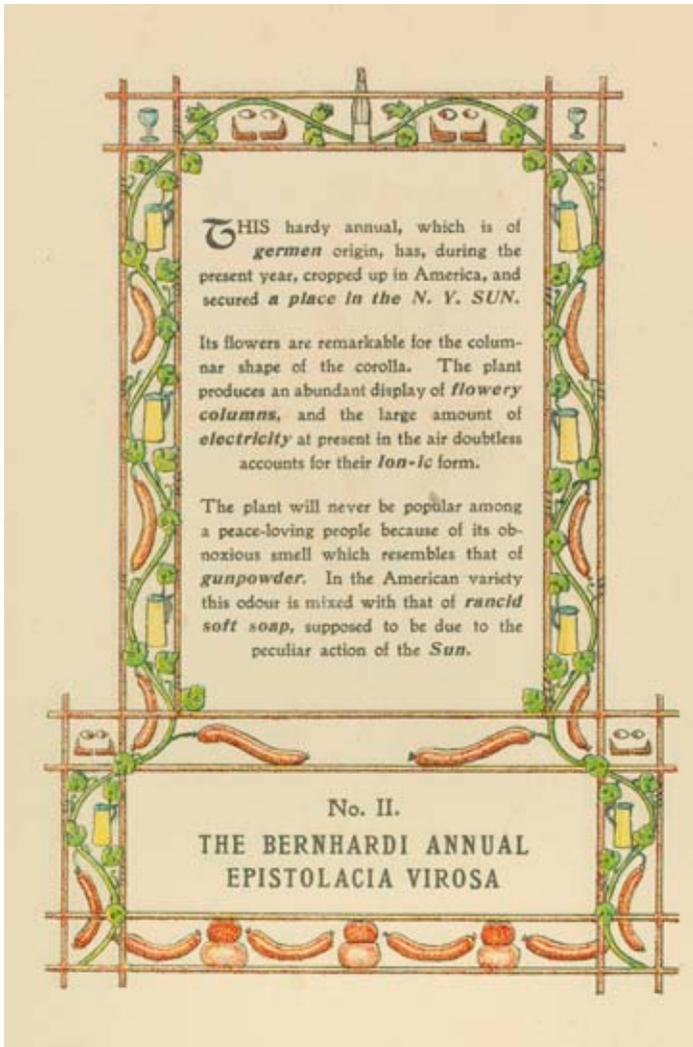
Although the Crown Prince was the Commander of the 5th Army, he gave an interview in which he described the War as "senseless, unnecessary and uncalled for" (Wiegand, 1915: 4). See Additional Note 1.



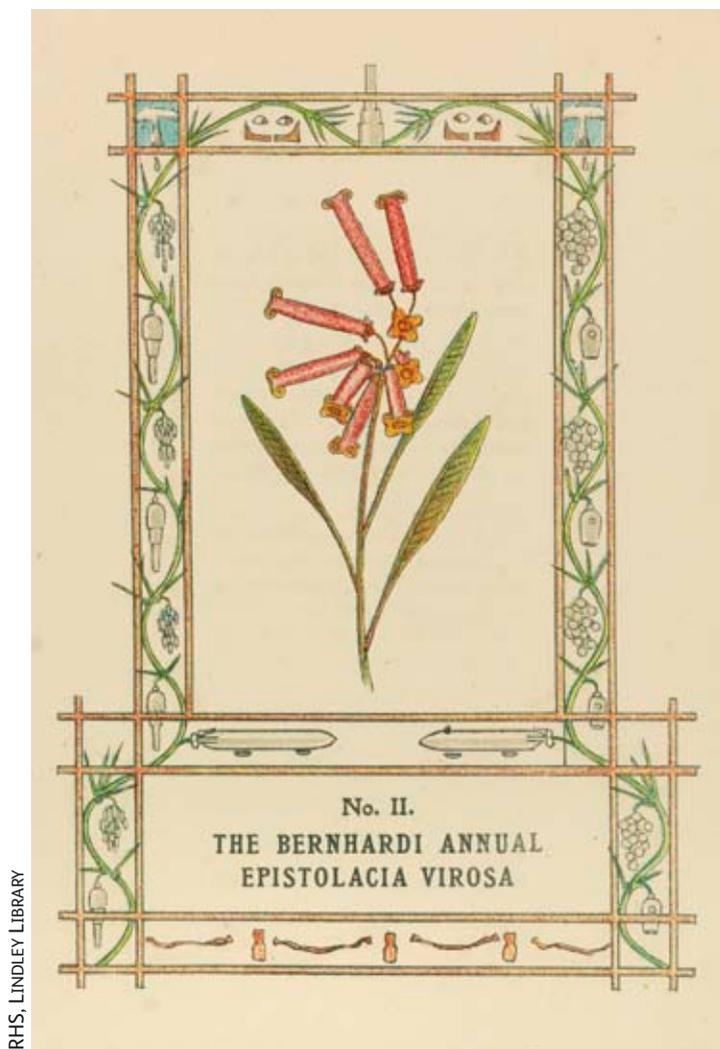
I. *Sanguinaria williamia*. *Sanguinaria williamia*, i.e. Bloody William; Sanguinariaceae, i.e. bloody family. Wilhelm II, known familiarly in England as Kaiser Bill, was the grandson of Queen Victoria. I wonder whether it is significant that he was never made an Honorary Fellow of the RHS, nor asked to sign a Royal Autograph.



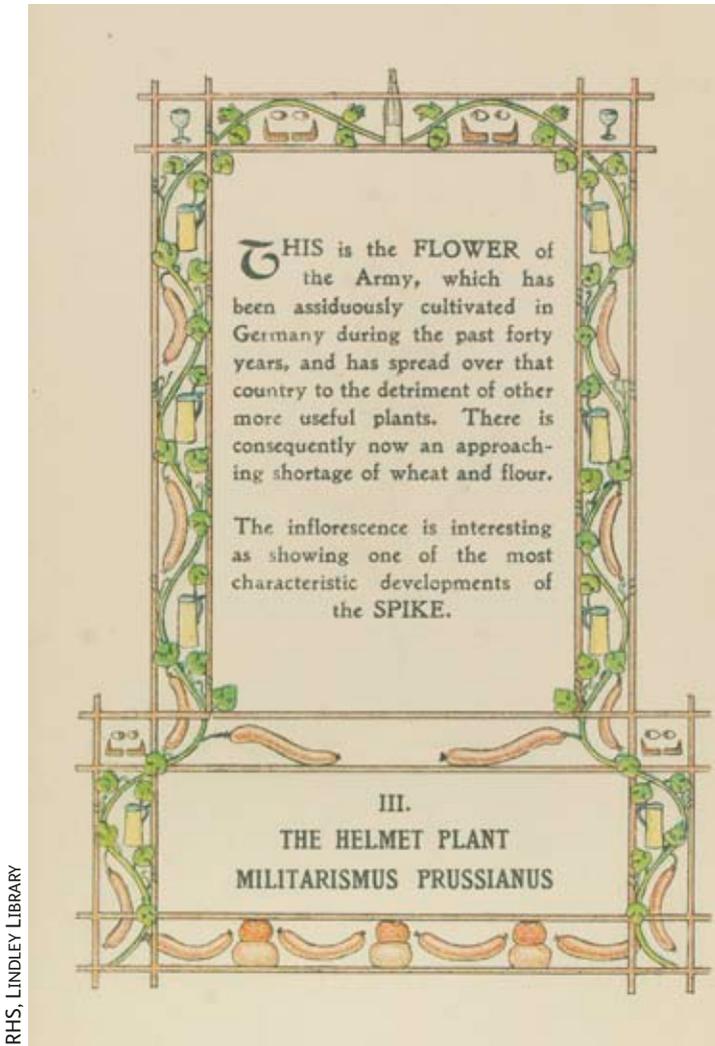
The drawing caricatures his moustache and epaulettes. Western or eastern aspect – the 1905 Schlieffen Plan was intended to avoid a lengthy war on two fronts by using the railways for a speedy and decisive attack on one front, freeing the main armies for more protracted use on the other.



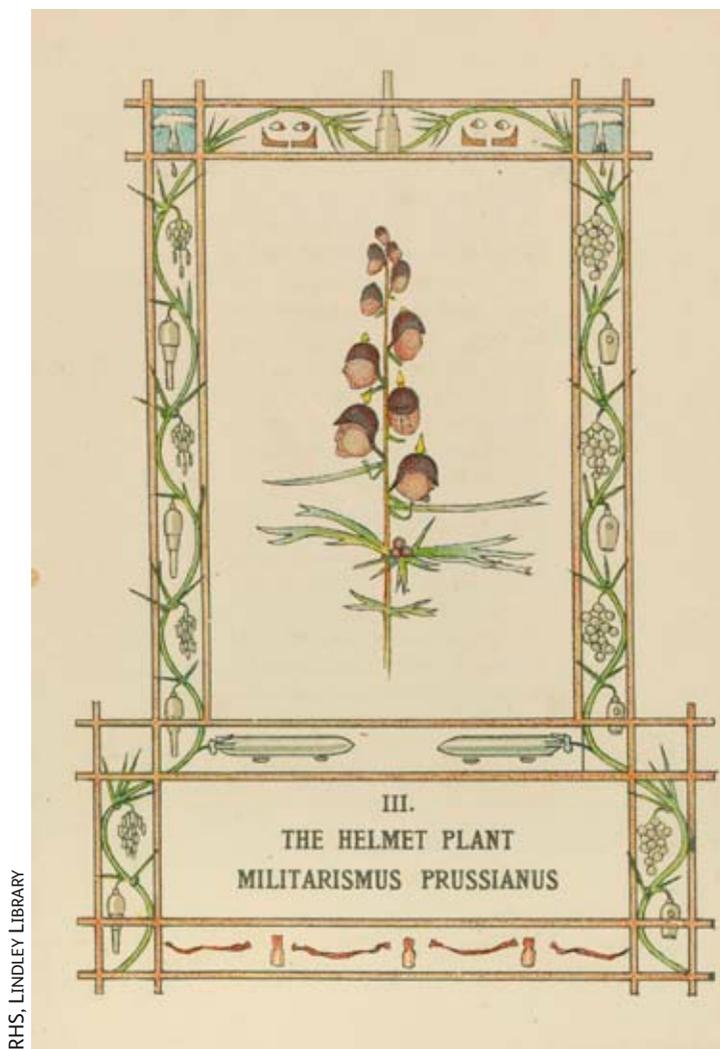
II. The Bernhardi annual – *Epistolacia virosa*. Bernhardi – a reference to Friedrich von Bernhardi, a German general who in 1911 and 1912 published books predicting, or calling for, a war against England (see Additional Note 2). “Ion-ic” because of Arrhenius’ ionic theory of electricity, and because the columns in the illustration have Ionic capitals (like the Altes Museum and the Munich Glyptothek).



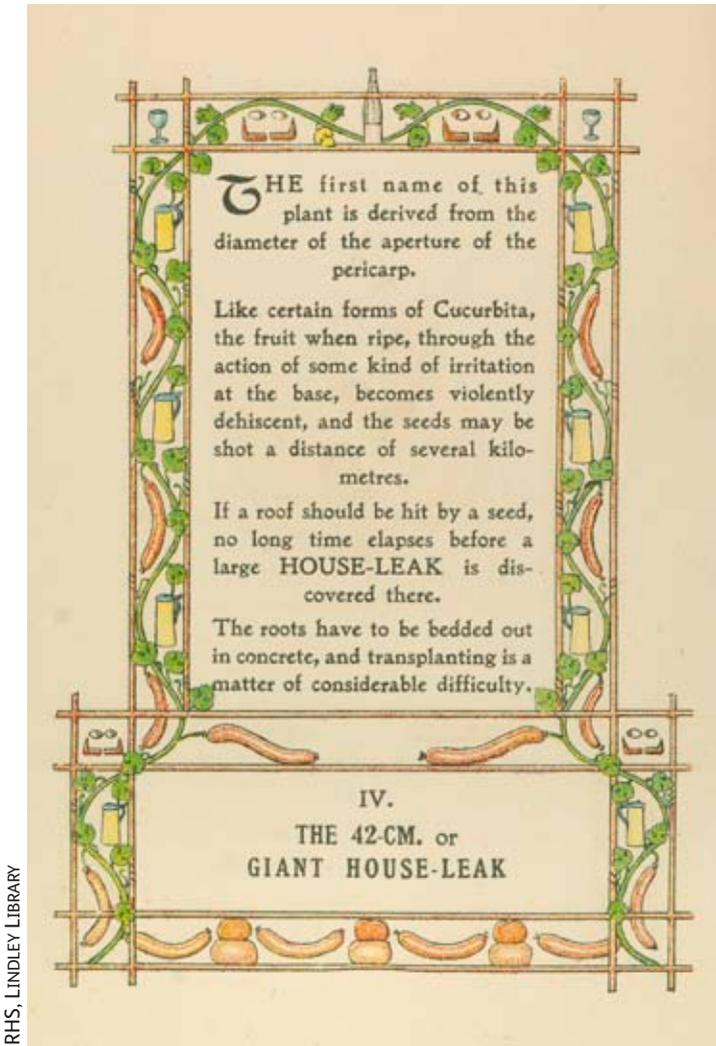
“*Epistolacia virosa*”, meaning “poisonous letters”. The *New York Sun* provided a forum in which Karl von Wiegand published articles defending Germany and its conduct of the War (Wiegand, 1915; esp. 19–29, “Chaos in the Rules of War”, and “No Rules of War”).



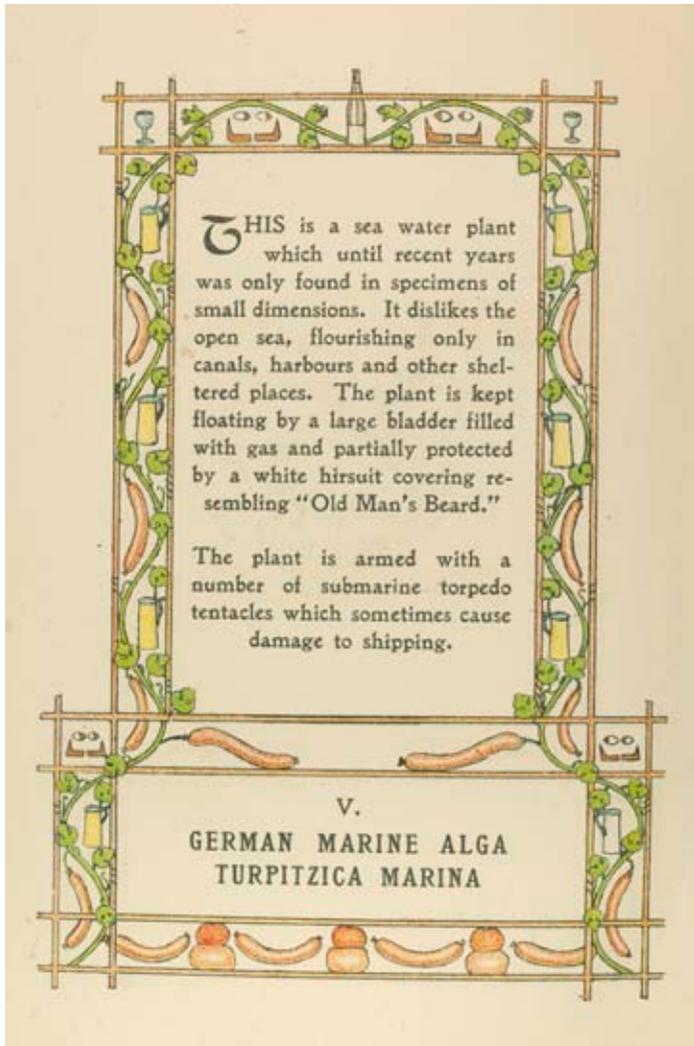
III. The helmet plant – *Militarismus prussianus*. “Flower of the army” is a phrase long used in military panegyrics, familiar from Clarendon, Gibbon, and the Oxford edition of Tacitus. “The past forty years”, i.e. since the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, when Germany defeated France, ending the French Second Empire and adding the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to the German confederation.



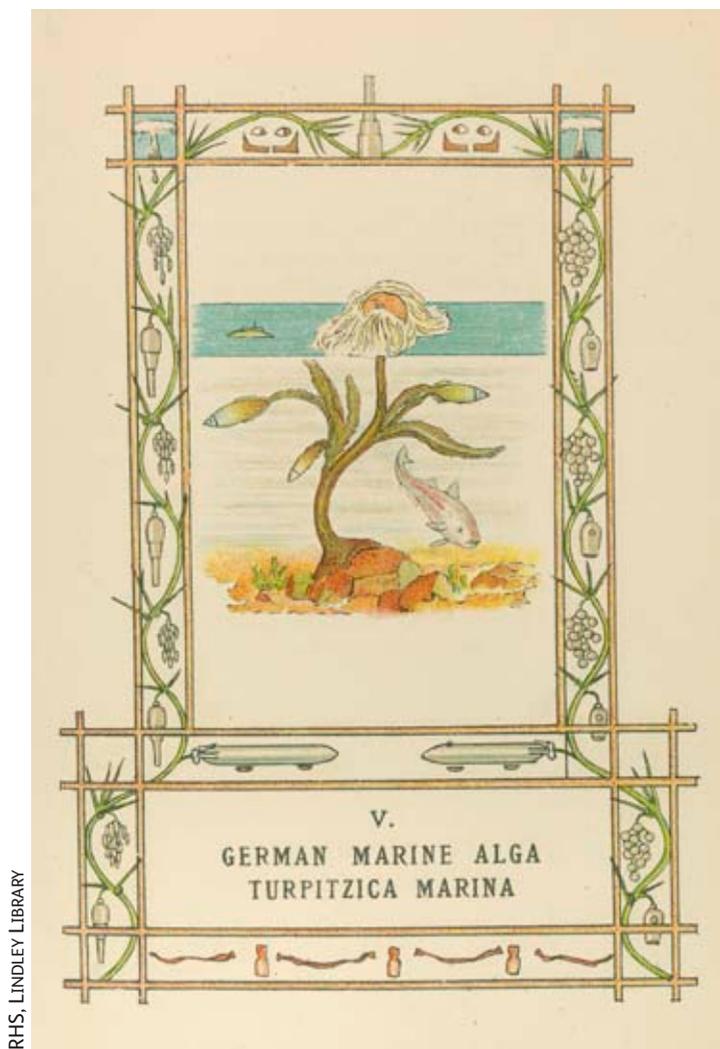
The spiked helmet or Pickelhaube had been designed by King Frederick William IV of Prussia (Honorary Fellow of the Horticultural Society, 1825), and adopted throughout Germany after unification. It turned out to offer insufficient protection against shell injuries in the trenches, and was first restricted to court or decorative use, then finally abolished after the War.



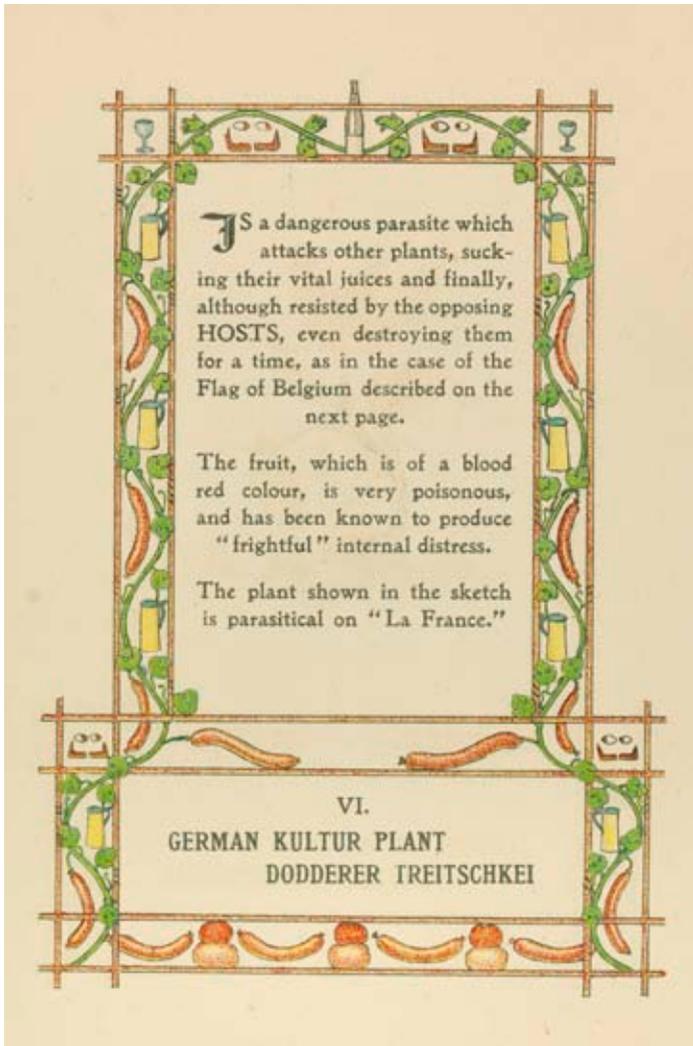
IV. The 42-cm. or Giant house-leak. House-leak, from “houseleek”, vernacular name for *Sempervivum tectorum*, whose shape is mimicked in the cartoon. The 42-cm howitzer, the largest piece of field artillery devised up to that time, was nicknamed “Big Bertha”, after Bertha Krupp, the owner of the Krupp firm which developed the weapon.



V. German marine alga – *Turpitzica marina*. *Turpitzica marina*, a reference to Admiral Alfred Peter Friedrich von Tirpitz (1849–1930), Secretary of State for the Imperial Naval Office. The spelling has been modified to suggest turpitude. The illustration depicts Tirpitz as a seaweed, and suggests his beard, but not very accurately (see Additional Note 3).



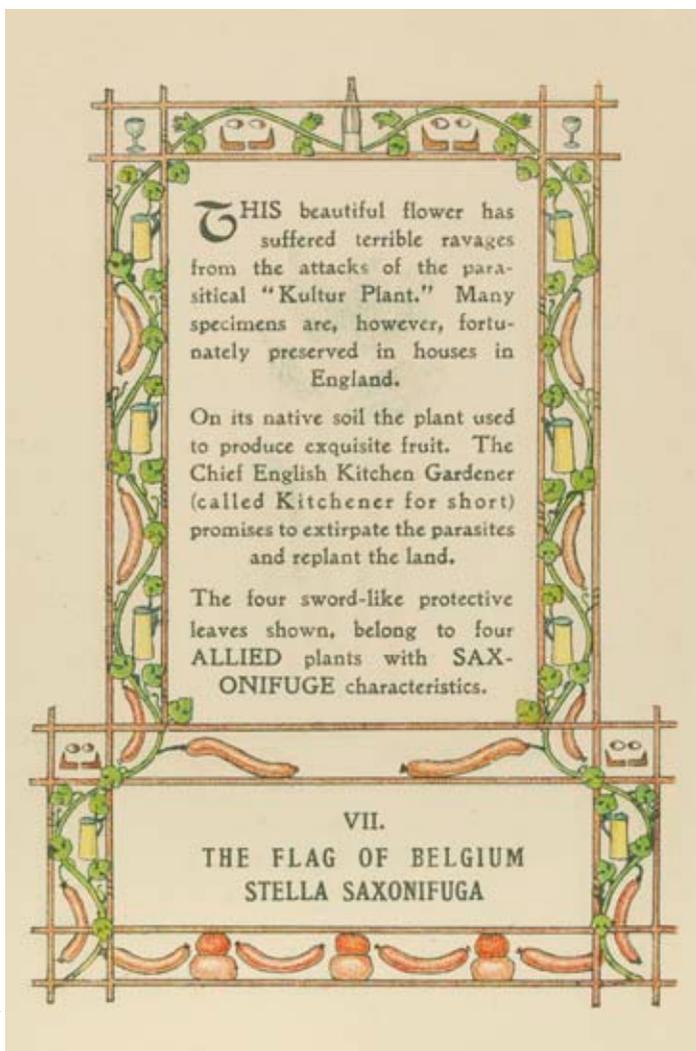
Submarine torpedo tentacles: the first military submarine campaign was launched on 8 August 1914, when a U-boat flotilla unsuccessfully attacked the Royal Navy in the North Sea. By 1915 submarine warfare had become common in the North Sea and the Mediterranean.



VI. German kultur plant – Dodderer treitschkei. "Dodderer treitschkei" is a reference to the great historian Treitschke, which manages both to suggest that he had a dodder-like stranglehold on the German intellect, and to remind readers of his enfeebled final years. No visual resemblance to Treitschke is observable in the cartoon.



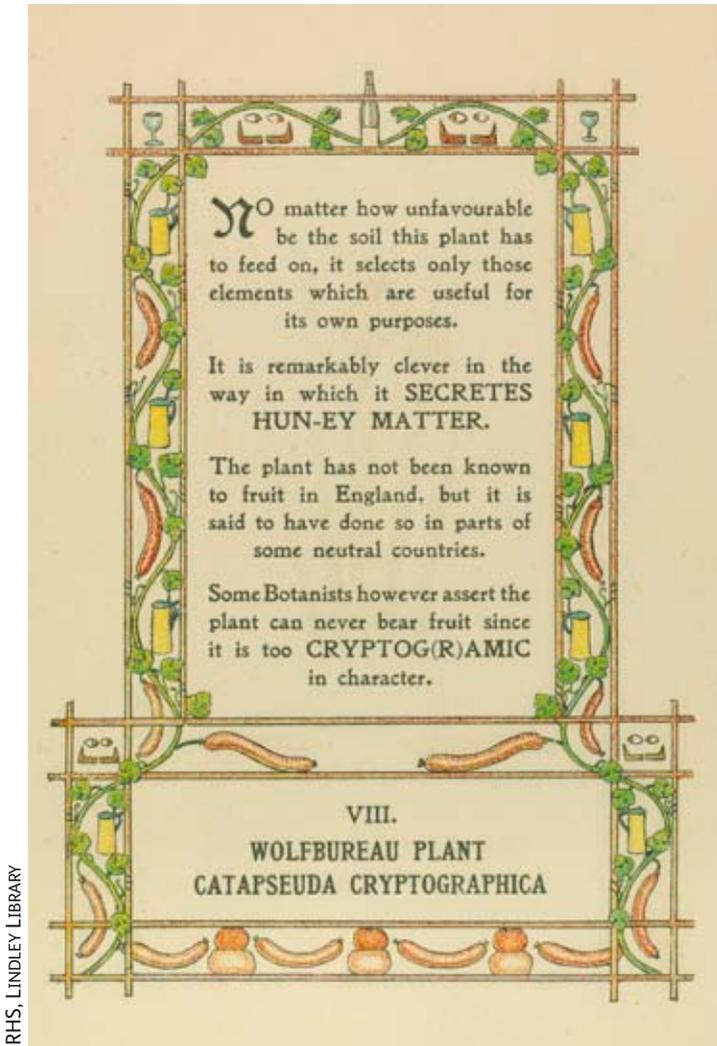
Treitschke (1834–1896) had been a supporter of Bismarck and of German unification, and was viewed as a defender of ruthless state power. “Parasitical on ‘La France’” [the name of a hybrid tea rose], because of Treitschke’s triumphalism over Germany’s defeat of France in 1871. See Additional Note 4.



VII. The flag of Belgium – *Stella saxonifuga*. Flag – a common vernacular name for iris, as depicted in the cartoon. "Saxonifuga" – fleeing from the Saxons, i.e. the Germans. "Preserved in houses in England" – Belgian refugees in England. "Exquisite Fruit" – possibly a reference to the destruction of Belgian nurseries, highlighted in the British gardening press. See Additional Note 5.



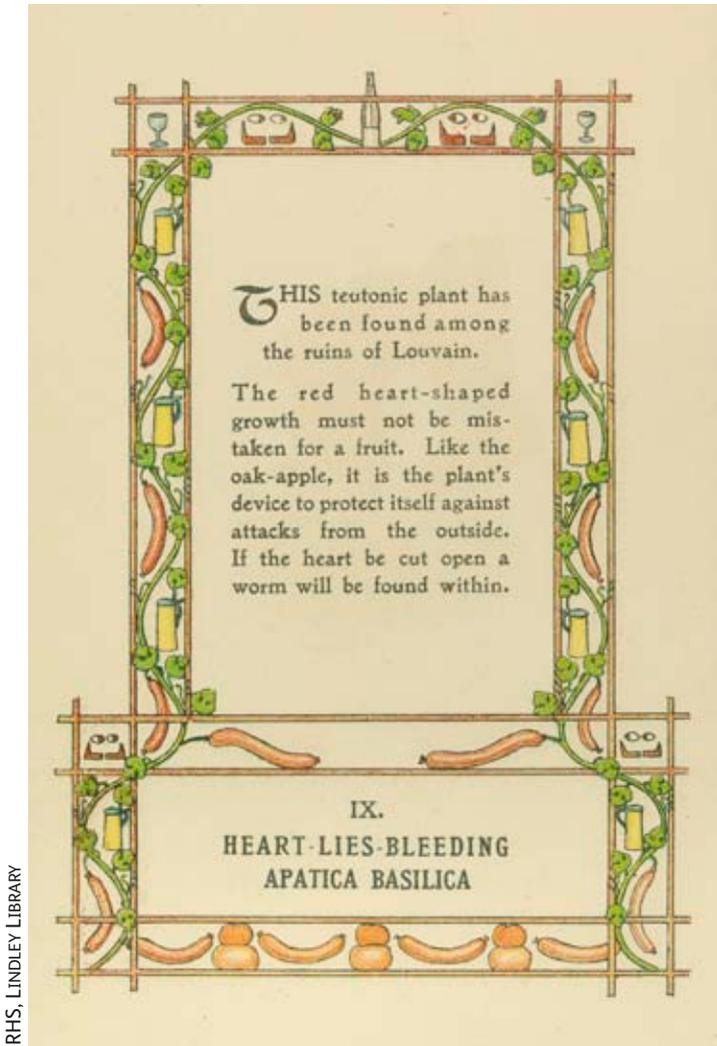
Kitchener – a reference to Lord Kitchener (1850–1916), Secretary of State for War.
The four allied plants: Britain, France, Russia, and Serbia.



VIII. Wolfbureau plant – *Catapseuda cryptographica*. “Wolfbureau” is a reference to Wolffs Telegraphisches Bureau, one of the first European press agencies. The cartoon makes the plant resemble a telegraph pole. Hun-ey matter, i.e. matter favourable to the “Huns”. Neutral countries – another reference to German propaganda in the United States.



Catapseuda, from cata-, Greek for downward (and so meaning degenerate, inferior) and pseudo-, meaning fake. Cryptog(r)amic – a pun on cryptogram (encrypted message) and cryptogam, a term derived from Linnaeus for plants without flowers, such as ferns and fungi (hence the inability to bear fruit).

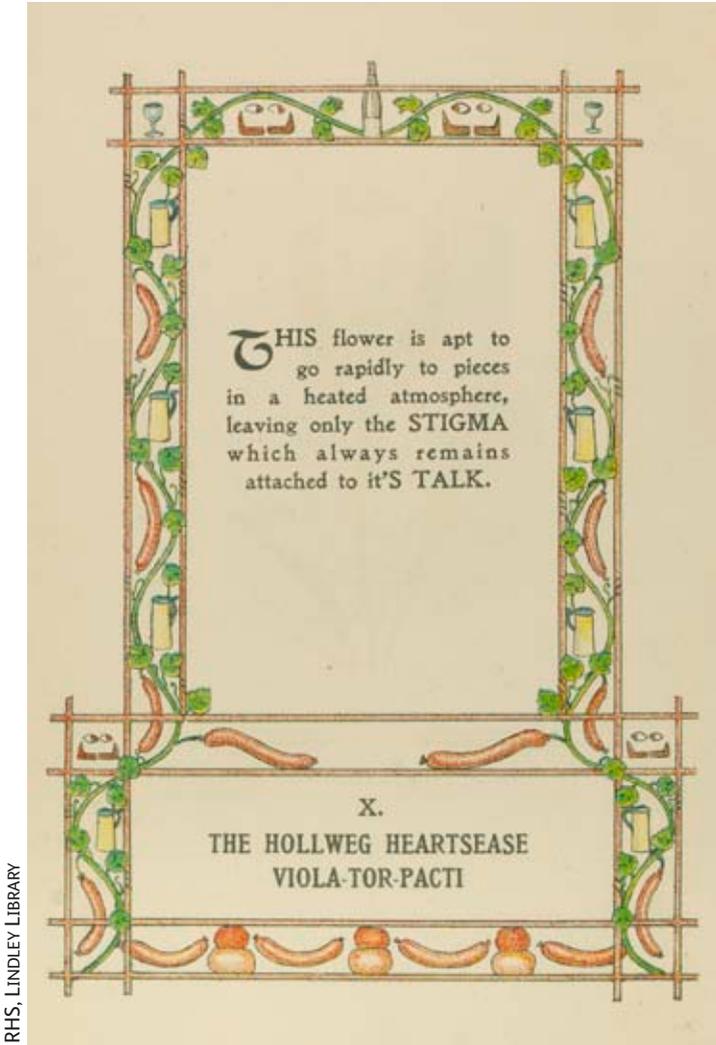


IX. Heart-lies-bleeding – *Apatica basilica*. “Love-lies-bleeding” can be a vernacular name for *Dicentra spectabilis*, suggested in the heart-shaped flowers in the cartoon. The oak-apple is a gall – not a defensive growth by the plant, but the result of a gall wasp laying its eggs within the plant.

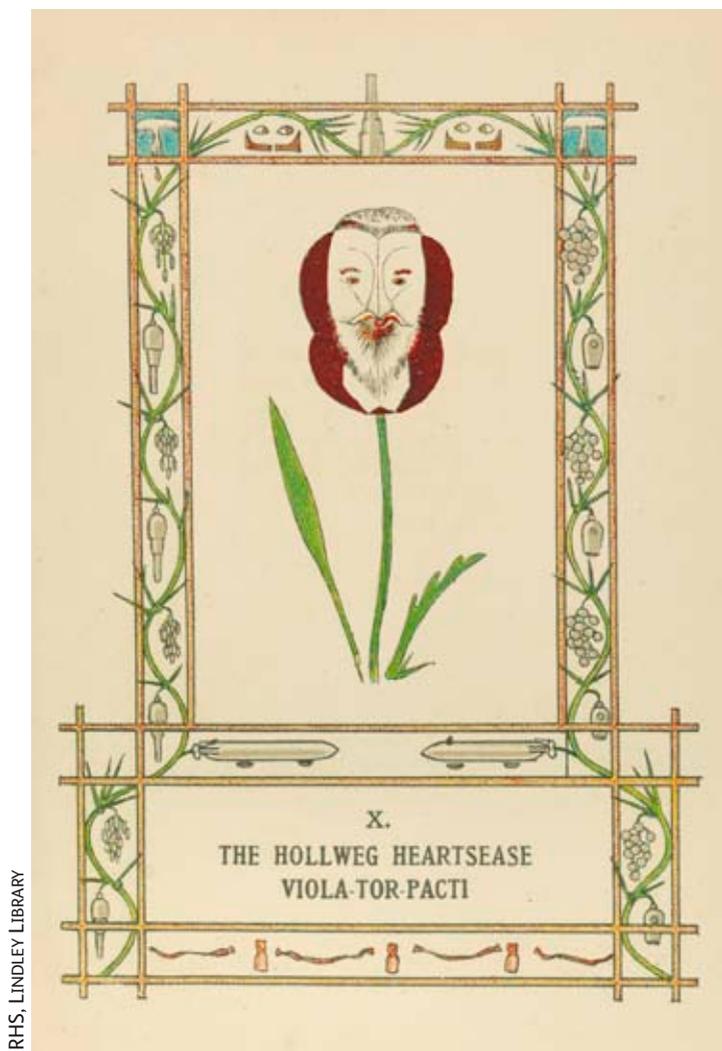


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“Apatica”, suggesting apathy (indifference). “Basilica” meant originally not a church but an open public building, and so could be used for the university library at Louvain, largely destroyed by shelling in August 1914, to international protest. See Additional Note 6.



X. The Hollweg heartsease – *Viola-tor-pacti*. The cartoon shows the flower of a heartsease (*Viola tricolor*), modified to suggest the features of Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856–1921), Chancellor of the German Empire. Stigma – moral stigma, and also the portion of the female organ of the flower which receives the pollen.



“Violator pacti” – because he had been making alliances with Britain before the War, and specifically because he subverted a last-ditch proposal for arbitration by Sir Edward Grey, by deleting the last line of Grey’s letter suggesting that Germany could avoid war by mediating between Austria and Serbia.

Additional notes

1. Crown Prince Wilhelm (1882–1951) was Commander of the 5th Army. In 1915 he gave an interview to Karl von Wiegand, in which he described the war as “senseless, unnecessary and uncalled for”. *Punch* replied to this with a cartoon by Leonard Raven-Hill (28 April 1915: 323), in which the Crown Prince reflects, “I don’t believe I was meant to win battles; I believe I was meant to be loved”. He is shown as pensive, with a champagne bottle sticking out of one pocket of his greatcoat, and a handful of watches and jewellery, tactfully labelled “Loot”, sticking out of the other. This detail relates to allegations which the Crown Prince described to Wiegand: “The English papers have stated that I am a thief and that I have personally robbed and pillaged these French houses in which we have been forced to make our headquarters” (Wiegand, 1915: 7).

2. Friedrich Adolf Julius von Bernhardt (1849–1930) published *Deutschland und der Nächste Krieg* (1911), translated into English in 1914 as *Germany and the Next War*, and *Vom heutigen Kriege* (1912), published in abridged translation that same year as *On War of To-day*. In these books he praised war as biologically necessary, accused Britain of blocking Germany’s justifiable attempts to establish a colonial empire, and called for war on France to remove the major threat to Germany’s well-being.

Once the War was under way, Bernhardt found himself backtracking, and published articles – among other places, in the *New York Sun* – in which he claimed that he had been misinterpreted. A satirical pamphlet was published in England (Anon., 1914) comparing these revisionary statements with passages from his famous book. For example, set against his statement that “The object of German militarism was not to attack the liberty of other States”, was placed this passage (from Bernhardt, 1914: 23):

Might gives the right to occupy or to conquer. Might is at once the supreme right, and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war. War gives a biologically just decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things (Bernhardt, 1914: 23, quoted in Anon., 1914: 7).

3. The illustration shows Tirpitz’s face in the guise of a floating organism, though it doesn’t depict the characteristic fork in his beard, as shown



Fig. 1. Crown Prince Wilhelm (1882–1951), Commander of the 5th Army, from a cartoon in *Punch*, 1915.

overleaf in the detail from a cartoon by Leonard Raven-Hill in *Punch* (3 February 1915: 83), depicting Tirpitz in the role of walking, or rather wading, wounded – a reference to the sinking of the *Blücher* on the Dogger Bank, 24 January 1915.

4. Treitschke is not much read nowadays, but his *German History*, which covered the years from the Napoleonic Wars to 1848, is still unsurpassed for its account of the numerous individual German states and principdoms in the generations before unification. It is noteworthy that the English translation appeared during the First World War, and that the translators tactfully avoided any mention of the War in their prefatory matter. In view



Fig. 2. Tirpitz, in a detail from a cartoon by Leonard Raven-Hill in *Punch*, 1915.

of the sagging of Treitschke's reputation during the twentieth century, it is worth recalling that G.P. Gooch described him as "The youngest, greatest and last of the Prussian School" of historians (Gooch 1913: 147, and see 147–155).

From his first appearance as a writer, Treitschke courted controversy for the extremism of his opinions. A zealous supporter of German unification, he became convinced that the future of Germany lay in Prussian domination, and he vociferously campaigned for smaller states, including his native Saxony, to accept Prussian rule. His rival historians Theodor Mommsen and Baumgartner attacked him for his rhetoric, which included a demand for the "annihilation" of the smaller German states. This sort of talk led him to be regarded as a contributor to the ruthlessness of German militarism. Let us once again invoke Gooch:

Treitschke fought his battles over again in his lectures. The crowded audiences listened to unmeasured attacks on France and England, socialism and the Jews, pacifism and Parliamentary Government.... His main themes were the necessity of a strong State, an executive independent of party majorities, and the training of virile citizens. ... It was a lamentable end for a man who had rendered eminent services to

his country that he should become the champion of absolutism and heat the fires of chauvinism by wild and whirling words (Gooch, 1913: 155).

5. The *Gardeners' Chronicle* publicised the partial destruction of the cactus nursery of F. de Laet, near Antwerp, in its issue of 26 December 1914, calling for an eventual fund to help rehabilitate the “much-persecuted French and Belgian horticulturists”. In January 1915 it announced that the orchid grower Jules Hye de Crom had died as a result of his treatment during temporary imprisonment by the Germans. In the spring of 1915 the Royal Horticultural Society set up a fund for the relief of French, Belgian, and Serbian horticulturists whose gardens were damaged by the war, and the *Chronicle* responded with an editorial which accused the Germans of having “rioted in systematic destruction ... devoting [their] fine qualities of discipline and thoroughness to the debauch of civilisation”. See Elliott 2014 for details.

6. The university library at Louvain (or Leuven) was largely destroyed on 25 August 1914, some 230,000 volumes – including mediaeval manuscripts and incunabula – being burned. The destruction of the library provoked immediate international outrage, in response to which an ill-judged manifesto was issued in October, signed by 93 German scholars and scientists, including eight out of the fourteen living German Nobel Prize winners. The “Aufruf an die Kulturwelt” (sometimes called in English the Manifesto of the 93) claimed that Germany had been forced into war by the aggression of other countries, and that all allegations of cruelty or inhumanity were lies. The reputations of many of the signatories were permanently damaged by their association with the document. Some had not read the manifesto before signing it; some, like Max Planck, were horrified when they saw in the press what they had felt pressured to sign (Stern, 2000: 45–46, 113–115). For recent discussions of the “Aufruf” and its consequences, see Flasch (2000), esp. pp. 62–99, and Hanna (1996), esp. pp. 78–105.

An American fundraising campaign raised enough money to restore the university library, and the replacement building was opened in 1928.

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With thanks to Caroline Lam of the Geological Society for help with biographical research on Woodhouse.

A tale of two societies: the Royal Horticultural Society and the Ruhleben Horticultural Society

BRENT ELLIOTT

c/o The Lindley Library, the Royal Horticultural Society, London

The First World War had a striking effect on the Royal Horticultural Society. The first effects were losses: a number of the Society's garden staff at Wisley volunteered for service, and the problems of maintaining a large garden with what seemed steadily diminishing staff numbers eventually drove the Society to the (temporary) expedient of hiring female gardeners; and not all the Wisley volunteers survived the War to return to duty. The Society's exhibition hall in London was commandeered by the War Office for the billeting of Australian troops, and the Society did not succeed in recovering it until the War had been over for a year – after which came the protracted negotiations of getting reparations for the damage the troops had caused. The Chelsea Flower Show was held normally in 1915, since no one at that time expected the War to last as long as it did; but in 1916 the Show was criticised for the frivolity of displaying ornamental horticulture at a time when food production should be paramount, and the Show was cancelled for the duration (Elliott, 2004: 39–42 for a summary of the Society's wartime history, and the sources footnoted there).

The RHS began the War by urging people to maintain their normal gardening activities, and continue buying plants: the nursery trade should be kept solvent. But as submarine warfare and blockades began to restrict the importation of food from overseas, the Government and the Society moved to the active promotion of domestic food growing, the Society by issuing pamphlets on subjects ranging from the selection of fruit trees to techniques of bottling and preservation.

The Society also devoted increasing amounts of time and energy to fundraising for the war effort. From its own resources, and with the aid of various seed houses, it sent flowers and plants to military bases and field hospitals in France to help to make the environments more salubrious with a bit of display gardening; testimony to the results survives in the form of a drawing by the architect Marcel Chabot, showing views in the grounds of the special hospital and camp at Sanvic, Le Havre, sent to the RHS in gratitude. But very early in the War the question also arose of the treatment of gardeners and nurserymen in the war zone; the *Gardeners'*

Chronicle published photographs of the damage caused to the Belgian cactus nursery of F. De Laet in December 1914, and the following month it reported the death of the celebrated orchid grower Jules Hye de Crom after his treatment in temporary detention. The RHS announced the creation of a fund to help with the relief of Allied horticulturists after the War's end. Fundraising ranged from the primitive and local (a boy with a pony at the 1915 Chelsea Show) to the eventual Fund Committee with its own staff, which raised £45,000 and used it to purchase seeds, fruit trees, and tools for French and Belgian gardeners. Sir Harry Veitch, who had played a major role in the relief campaign, was awarded the Légion d'Honneur (Elliott, 2014a).

A smaller-scale, but intensely interesting, aspect of the Society's activities on behalf of wartime horticulture abroad was its involvement with the Ruhleben Horticultural Society, an organisation created by prisoners in a civilian internment camp in Germany. The story of the Ruhleben camp has built up a substantial literature, ranging from the series of accounts by inmates and visitors published during and immediately after the War (McLaren, 1916; Mahoney, 1917; Sladen, 1917; Farmer, 1919; Powell & Gribble, 1919), to the study of prisoners' behaviour from psychological and sociological points of view (Ketchum, 1965), to the more recent study of prison camps as a forgotten or hitherto suppressed aspect of military history (Stibbe, 2008; Steuer, 2009; and see generally Panayi, 2012: 1–38). The Ruhleben Horticultural Society attracted attention in the horticultural press at the time, but so far as I am aware the first account of it by a horticultural historian was an article which I published in *The Garden* in the month of the seventieth anniversary of the War's ending (Elliott, 1988). The recent flurry of commemorative interest in the centenary of the War's beginning has already resulted in three articles on the subject (Barnard, 2014; Elliott, 2014b; Griffiths, 2014), as well as an exhibition at the Garden Museum. There is now a website, compiled by Chris Paton (Paton, 2013), which is building up information about the lives of the individual internees, and as this project grows, we will no doubt learn more about the horticultural backgrounds and subsequent careers for which Ruhleben acted as a focus, so we are a long way from hearing the last word on the subject.

The internment camp at Ruhleben

The inception of the War took most people by surprise, both for the speed with which far-off events suddenly led everyone into war, and for the speed

with which the military events in Belgium and France transformed attitudes and mobilised nationalistic hatred on all sides. Civilian internment during wartime had a long and sporadic history, but in the late nineteenth century had been transformed by the introduction of the concentration camp, first by the Spanish during the Cuban War, followed by the British in the Boer War. In each case the excuse was that the military had to contend with a local population whose intentions could not be trusted. Civilian internment of enemy aliens was initiated by Britain; on 5 August 1914 the Aliens Restriction Act was passed, and under its auspices German and Austrian civilians who could be regarded as threats to the safety of the realm were arrested; by the end of the month over 4,000 people were in custody. The Germans responded at the beginning of September, when arrests of British civilians began on a small scale. At the end of October the German government demanded the release of German nationals from English internment camps, and threatened that if the demand was not met, they would seize and intern all British nationals in Germany. The mass arrests began on 6 November, and thousands of men were taken into custody. The Ruhleben race-course on the outskirts of Berlin had been chosen as the site of the internment camp; the first internees had arrived at the Engländerlager Ruhleben on 9 September 1914.

They ranged from tourists who had failed to get home in time and Wagner-lovers who had rashly attended the Bayreuth Festival that year, to British students at German universities and employees of German companies. Some were professional gardeners; one of these, who died too soon to play a part in the Horticultural Society, was Henry Thomas Martin (1866–1915), who had been working as gardener to Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia (possibly at Krojanke).

At the risk of seeming to deviate from the theme of horticulture, it is worth while giving some account of conditions in the Ruhleben camp in its early months, in order to give a baseline from which the subsequent achievements of the inmates and the Society can be measured. The best early account is that of Henry Mahoney, published while the War was still in progress (Mahoney, 1917: 266–330). He arrived at Ruhleben on 14 November 1914, after the camp had been in existence for over two months, to find conditions chaotic and the administration indifferent if not worse:

The party to which I was attached was escorted to a stable which was of the ordinary single floor type, characteristic of these islands, with a row

TELEGRAMS: "VERBOTEN", SPANDAU. ALL POSTAL MATTER FREE.

RUHLEBEN ON THE SPREE.

THE RENOWNED RESORT FOR RESTFUL RELAXATION.

ONE OF THE LEADING HOTELS. A, CENTRAL HEATING & B, WATER (COLD & COLDER).

ONE OF THE CHARMING EARRESTIC SHELTERS OR TENTS PRESENTED TO THE TOWN BY H. GARIBAY.

TYPICAL STREET SCENE SHOWING FINEST GARDENS (C).

ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SEATS (A, B, C, HAYWEE).

THE ARTIFICIAL LAKE. (E) A PLEASURE BOAT. (F) ONE OF THE ONE SWANS.

THE CELEBRATED RESTAURANT PINE. A, THE GENIAL MANAGER.

CUBBIE HALL TEMPERANCE HOTEL, 5 MINUTES FROM RAILWAY STATION, 100 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL! IDEALLY SITUATED. PRIVATE GOLF COURSE. WINTER GARDENS IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION. ENGLISH CHEFS. UNIFORMED NIGHT PORTERS. NO FOREIGN WAITERS. COOKS & TOURISTS ACCEPTED. EVERYTHING MODERATE. PROPRIETORS: -LOFTS LIMITED.

RHS, LINDLEY LIBRARY

Fig. 1. The Ruhleben camp magazine.

of horse-boxes and a loft for the storage of hay and other impedimenta above. The horse-boxes measured ten feet square and had only been cleaned out perfunctorily. The raw manure was still clinging to the walls, while the stalls were wet from the straw which had recently been removed. Indeed in some stalls it had not been cleared out...

The authorities cannot be credited with being liberal in assigning us space. The roof rafters were spaced 10 feet apart and between each two of these five men had to shake down their beds. Thus each was given a space 2 feet in width by 6 feet in length in which to make himself at home and to stow his belongings. The quarters were so cramped that to dress and undress it was necessary to stand in the centre of the gangway which ran down the middle of the loft. Once in bed it was almost impossible to turn over. To make matters worse the roof was far from being watertight... (Mahoney, 1917: 268–9).

After the first five months, things began to improve.

Apart from security and maintaining order in the camp, the German authorities' major problem was that of feeding the inmates. Even before blockades began to have a serious effect on the country's food supply, there was pressure to keep the government's expenditure on food for enemy aliens to a minimum.

Herr Heinz Potthoff, a leading light in the Progressive Radical Party, declared [late in 1915] that hundreds of thousands of prisoners were consuming Germany's food. "If Germany sees herself obliged to choose between slaying them and surrendering what she has won by the sword, she must decide upon the former course." Some people here may not take such pronouncements quite seriously, but they contain within them a whole world of *Deutschtum* (McLaren, 1916: 221).

(The sentiment was not as foreign to Britain as the author implied, or hoped; similar pronouncements about the treatment of German enemy aliens in British camps could be found in the pages of *John Bull*.) This background may explain the episode of the straw experiment, as described from the victims' perspective by Mahoney:

We had been lying for quite six months upon this straw when we were suddenly paraded to receive the order to re-appear a quarter

of an hour later with our beds. Re-parading we were commanded to empty the sacks to form a big pile, and it was a repulsive-looking accumulation. But we observed this straw was collected and carted away very carefully...

We thought no more about the straw which we had been compelled to exchange for the shavings until we learned that a German newspaper was shrieking with wild enthusiasm about Teuton resourcefulness and science having scored another scintillating economic triumph. According to this newspaper an illustrious professor had discovered that straw possessed decidedly valuable nourishing qualities essential to human life, and that it was to be ground up and to enter into the constitution of the bread, which accordingly was now to be composed of at least three constituents – wheat-meal, potato flour, and straw. Some of us began to ponder long and hard over the straw which had so suddenly been taken away from us, especially myself, as I had experienced so many of the weird tactics which are pursued by the Germans in their vain efforts to maintain their game of bluff.

I asked every member of our party, in the event of discovering a foreign article in his bread, to hand it over to me because I had decided to become a collecting fiend of an unusual type. Contributions were speedily forthcoming, and they ranged over pieces of dirty straw, three to four inches in length, fragments of coke, pieces of tree-bark, and odds and ends of every description – in fact just the extraneous substances which penetrated into our loft with the mud clinging to our boots and which, of course, became associated with the loose straw (Mahoney, 1917: 272–3).

By May 1916 the weekly rations issued by the camp authorities to each prisoner had been stabilised at seven ounces of fresh meat (including bones, fat, and gristle), seven and a half ounces of fresh fish (or seven ounces of sausage or legumes), and about nine pounds of potatoes. Sladen reproduces a comic advertisement from the camp magazine: “LOST. A Potato. Reward on return to Contractor, Cook House” (Sladen, 1917: 263).

Small wonder, then, that the interned civilians decided to take matters into their own hands, and if they had no prospect of being released until the undetermined end of the War, they would at least ensure decent conditions.

At last, after a short and determined deliberation, it was resolved to run the colony upon communal lines. This was the only feasible form of control in order to protect the prisoners against scandalous robbery, extortionate prices, and to ensure a sufficiency of the essentials which were in such urgent demand. A simple, although comprehensive form of civic government was drawn up, involving the formation of educational facilities, a police force, a fire brigade, the establishment and maintenance of shops and canteens, all of which were operated by the community for the benefit of the community, the receipts being pooled in the camp treasury (Mahoney, 1917: 283).

And one of the first uses of this pooled money was the establishment of camp stores, which traded with grocers and other provision merchants near the camp for extra foodstuffs, clothing, and other essentials and desirables. In August 1915 the foodstuffs purchased by the camp store on a weekly basis consisted of butter, margarine, cheese, sausages, ham, condensed milk, sugar, eggs, bacon, and salt. As time went by, the camp came to boast a row of shops, on a thoroughfare nicknamed "Bond Street". Mahoney in 1917 could claim that "Thousands of pounds sterling were passed over the counters every week", and boast that the reputation of the English as a nation of shopkeepers had been triumphantly proven. "The Germans have never spent a penny on our behalf", he said, "and have never given us anything" (Mahoney 1917: 285, 293). This may be somewhat exaggerated, but a more dispassionate observer, Sir John Masterman, later said that "we were fed from home, through the Red Cross, whilst the Germans only contributed a token ration to us" (Masterman, 1975: 102).

Sometimes the camp has to be reminded, "(1) That we are in a concentration camp; (2) That it is war-time, and that prices are fluctuating from time to time as a consequence; (3) That we are in Germany, and that such things as English tobacco are not to be had just outside the gate." (Sladen, 1917: 266).

Concurrent with the attempt to improve their diet and facilities were efforts to organise activities within the camp. First came a debating society, and concerts; then the stage – the four years of internment saw a steady stream of productions of plays by Shaw, Barrie, Galsworthy, *et al.*; then a camp school, with lecturers giving talks on the sciences,

literature, and philosophy; then, from March 1915, organised recreation. (The inmates' expenditures included paying the camp authorities for the use of portions of the grounds to serve as tennis courts and a football field, at £50 each.) But it was the educational programme that first brought Ruhleben to the attention of the horticultural world in Britain. In September 1916 the *Gardeners' Chronicle* reprinted a report from the *Daily Telegraph* on the classes being held there, indicating its special interest by retitling it "Botany classes at Ruhleben".

The class in practical botany, which is similar to any first year's university course, is conducted by Mr. A. E. LECHMERE, D.Sc. (London and Paris), and Mr. M. S. PEASE B.A. (Cantab.), and is attended regularly by twenty-one students. Dr. LECHMERE is also giving a complete course in invertebrate zoology, extending over twelve months; and lectures on plant physiology are given by Mr. M. S. PEASE. All the living material required is obtained from the pond in the centre of the Ruhleben race track¹, which contains a very good variety of flora and fauna (Anon., 1916).

This account omits the fact that some of the material for the classes came from sources outside the camp. Among the inmates was the Canadian Grant Lochhead, who had been studying botany under Tubeuf at Munich; Tubeuf was able to arrange for microscopes and other equipment to be sent to his former student. Adolf Engler, the Director of the Berlin Botanic Garden, also sent a regular supply of plants for the classes (Anon., 1918).

A few biographical notes: Allan Grant Lochhead (1890–1980) later became Head of Bacteriology at the Dominion Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. Arthur Eckley Lechmere (1885–1919) was a mycologist who had been studying in Germany; on his release from Ruhleben, he went to work in the research department of the National Cider Institute at Long Ashton,

¹ A pond in the centre of a race track? Here is Mahoney on the subject: "To the British mind, saturated as it is with blind faith in German superior abilities in every ramification of human endeavour, it may seem incomprehensible, and the formation of the lake may be charitably attributed to the rain-water drainage system becoming choked, thus effectively preventing the escape of the water. But there was no drain to cope with this water, and what is more to the point the nuisance was never overcome until the British prisoners themselves took the matter in hand" (Mahoney, 1917: 282).

but died within a few months (Wager, 1920: 306–7). Michael Stewart Pease (1890–1960) went on to become a distinguished geneticist.

The beginnings of gardening at Ruhleben

None of the accounts of Ruhleben give any precise details of the first attempts at gardening. The report sent by the Horticultural Society to the RHS in September 1917 said in summary, “In the early days of Ruhleben Camp, horticulture was limited to a few enthusiasts and many of their gardens were confined within the walls of biscuit tins. These primitive efforts were followed by an era of barrack garden enterprise, somewhat sporadic in its outbursts” (RHS/Ruh/1/07). Powell and Gribble were slightly more specific:

Already in the summer of 1915, small and modest gardens began to appear beneath the windows of a number of the barracks; and the suspicious whispered that this was a German trick – that the Germans wanted to photograph these gardens in order to prove to the world that their Ruhleben prisoners were being pampered. But that was a mistake. The idea of the gardens had originated with the gardeners – men whose sole desire was to introduce a little beauty into their surroundings. Some of them grew shrubs in order to hide the barbed wire (Powell & Gribble, 1919: 193).

In 1916, a printing press having been purchased by the inmates, the first issue of the *Ruhleben Camp Magazine* was published. It contained an introductory article on gardening, written under the pseudonym of “Forget-Me-Not”. The entire text follows, in part because it describes in passing the peculiar circumstances under which gardening activities had to be conducted at Ruhleben.

There are signs that the welcome spring will soon be here, and though we cannot have the pleasure, – much longed for – of seeing and smelling our homely English flowers at home, I think that some hints to camp gardeners will not be out of place. It behoves the garden lover to be thinking of his Ruhleben bed, (I mean “garden bed”, of course!) and at once to obtain and prepare the soil for whatever variety of flowers or plants he intends to cultivate. Naturally, wherever possible a southerly aspect should be chosen; but where this is not possible

then take the next sunniest and most sheltered spot. I hope we shall see more of our almost national flower – the sweet pea – this summer. To cultivate this flower properly, the ground should be prepared and trenched as thoroughly [*sic*] as possible, up to three feet, and good manure placed at the bottom of the trench in the late autumn; but quite a nice show will be obtained if some good, already decayed manure is deeply dug into the ground without delay. Nasturtiums [*sic*] (climbers and dwarfs), Viola, or ordinary Pansies, Peptonias [*sic*], Asters, Begonias, Geraniums, Marguerite, &c., and a few nice bush roses will make a real good show with a minimum of trouble, and they will bloom all the summer. Cuttings of these or small plants can easily be obtained from a market gardener in Spandau. Lobelia and Feather fue [*sic*] will provide pretty borders, besides giving your bed a little variety of colour.

If I might suggest it, a show of *Convolvulus* along the front of the Barracks, trained up between the windows, would amply repay time and trouble spent; they are quite simple to cultivate. Prepare at once a narrow strip of ground, quite close to the wall of the Barrack, for the reception of the seeds, setting same from one and a half to two inches apart, and about the same depth. Seeds should be set from the 1st. to the middle of April, or even later, but not earlier. The climbing propensities of the *convolvulus* can be aided by means of string attached to nails driven into the wall. No doubt seeds have already been written for from home, but should this not be the case, there is time enough if you write at once. The Military Censor, Room 10, will pass a special letter ordering seeds, and thus save the usual ten days delay.

We have already seen the very pretty effect achieved by window boxes (Barrack 1. last summer), and it only remains for others to emulate their example. Get your boxes ready *now*, so that when the young plants are ready for planting out there is no delay. Don't forget to bore a few holes in the bottom of the boxes and under the soil; put a thin layer of broken pot or small clinkers to provide a sufficient drainage. The greatest enemy of some of our gardens last summer was the dust which fell on the plants, when the loft steps were being swept down. This can be easily remedied by collecting a sufficient number of boxes from the recipients of parcels, and nailing them on the underside of the steps. Plants, especially young ones, must be protected from dust, or they will never flourish. Never water your

garden when the sun is shining on it; the best time is in the evening, and then do it well, especially in the hot, dry weather. The best plan is to have a tub of water standing in the sun all day, thus taking away the chill, as ice-cold water direct from the main, takes too much heat out of the soil, thus having an adverse effect on the growth and strength of the roots of the plants. Do not fill your flower beds too full, but give each plant plenty of room for air and sun, without which they will not flourish. If you do not do this, you will only have disappointing results in return for your labours.

Perhaps some may think that gardens are superfluous in the Camp, but whether we be in our own land, or in someone else's, a pretty, well cared for garden, however small, reflects credit on those who provide it.

These few remarks will, I trust, be useful to those who have not had the opportunity of taking up gardening as a hobby – but are nevertheless willing to try their hand in making their present domicile as much like “Home sweet Home” as possible (Forget-Me-Not, 1916).

Reflect that this may have been the only written instruction that most of the novices at Ruhleben would encounter (though the Camp also had a bookshop, and while we have no record of the shop's traffic, gardening books could easily have been among the number traded).

The founding of the Ruhleben Horticultural Society

The first suggestion of an organisation for horticulture within the Ruhleben camp came from Michael Pease, in a little article in the first issue of the *Ruhleben Camp Magazine*, 1916.

No self-respecting Town Council in England is without its Parks and Gardens Committee; surely in Ruhleben, too, some public energy, and public funds, could be devoted to beautifying the Camp? With such a body in existence, some organised effort could be made with the happiest results, in the direction of utilising the spaces available for floral decoration. Some bright colour, for example, introduced round the arc lamps in the compound, and by the gateways, and in that dismal waste between the “village pump” and the dentist's surgery would be a source of untold joy to all, throughout the summer and

autumn, and would be one of the few beautiful things to which we could look back in Ruhleben. The thing is worth doing, and worth doing well; each Barrack should set to work to contribute its share of colour to the compound. Though not everyone, like Wordsworth, is moved beyond tears by the contemplation of a primrose, nearly all feel the fresh, graceful, and innocent appeal of flowers. "A Garden," says Bacon, "is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the Spirit of man." (Pease, 1916).

And while the purpose of Pease's proposal was the floral decoration of what might be called common ground, (i.e. not the precincts of individual barracks), I suspect that it was his proposal that started the idea of the Horticultural Society.

The immediate stimulus was a gift of seeds for the Camp from the Crown Princess of Sweden (formerly Princess Margaret of Connaught, the daughter of Prince Arthur, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society); the 1917 Report said that "it was decided to make this welcome gift the occasion of forming a horticultural society" (RHS/Ruh/1/07). Whose proposal this was is not recorded. The Society was formally inaugurated on 25 September 1916, in a meeting with M.S. Pritchard in the chair, and a committee formed. A few days later the new Secretary, Thomas Howat, wrote to the Royal Horticultural Society requesting affiliation. The RHS had been operating a programme of affiliation for local horticultural societies since the 1860s; these organisations, once they could confirm that they were using the RHS standards for judging exhibits, were given a certain number of medals which they could award on the Royal Horticultural Society's behalf at their own shows. A special Affiliated Societies' Medal had been struck in 1901, specifically for use on such occasions.

The exigencies of paper supply no doubt dictated that no fair copy of Howat's letter was made after its initial completion and editing; the version quoted here includes passages scored through and underlined.

~~I have been instructed by my Committee to inform you, that on Monday 25th. September 1916 a Horticultural Society was formed with the title "Ruhleben Horticultural Society" the aims of this Society being to cultivate and beautify the ground around the barracks and public thoroughfares in the Lager, and to further the~~

knowledge of Horticulture. We desire to become affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society. Under the circumstances in which we are ~~presently situated~~ we are unable ~~of course~~ to remit the usual fee but trust this will be no hindrance to our enjoying the privileges of affiliation.

[At this point William Wilks added an annotation: “certainly not. W.W. Sec. R.H.S.”]

It may interest the members of your Society to know that gardening started immediately after our internment in the Camp and since then has steadily increased. During this, our second summer, the magnificent show of flowers and tasteful decorative schemes which were carried out have done much to alleviate our lot. Although the individual efforts of our barrack gardeners have been very satisfactory we nevertheless feel, that as a Society we shall have greater scope and receive more support.

As the work we have in view is a large one we should be very grateful for gifts of bulbs and seeds.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

T Howat Secry. (RHS/Ruh/1/01)

The RHS Council met on 10 October, and the minutes record:

A letter from Mr. Thomas Howat interned in the Ruhleben Camp was read, asking that the Camp Horticultural Society might be affiliated.

It was proposed by Sir Albert Rollit

Seconded by Mr. Bilney

and carried

that the application be accepted without payment of subscription. With regard to the portion of the letter asking for bulbs and seeds, it was decided to send the letter to the Press. It was suggested that gifts should be sent out through the agency of the Red Cross Society for which the President said he would negotiate.

Wilks duly wrote two days later to Howat, and Howat replied on 20 December:

Dear Sirs,

I am in receipt of your letter of 12th.October announcing that the Ruhleben Horticultural Society is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society, London, which was laid before my Committee.

I am instructed to tender to you their heartiest thanks for this kind assistance to the Society's aims and also for the 5 cases and one parcel containing bulbs and seeds which have been duly received. These have been already planted and a very successful show is now assured. They also beg to acknowledge, with many thanks the receipt of the six pamphlets [sic] on gardening subjects and to inform you that a syllabus of Lectures has already been commenced with great success. A copy of this syllabus and also of the papers given, shall be forwarded in due course.

On Friday last I received your letter of 30th.Novbr. advising the despatch of eleven further cases of bulbs etc. and for this I wish to express to you our warmest thanks and also to those friends who so kindly sent us gifts of bulbs through your medium. As soon as the eleven cases arrive I shall inform you thereof.

Enclosed please find a few of our membership-cards which I hope will be of interest to you.

Again with many thanks and the best wishes to all for Xmas and the coming New Year,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

T. Howat

Hon. Secry. "Ruhleben Horticultural Society." (RHS/Ruh/1/02)

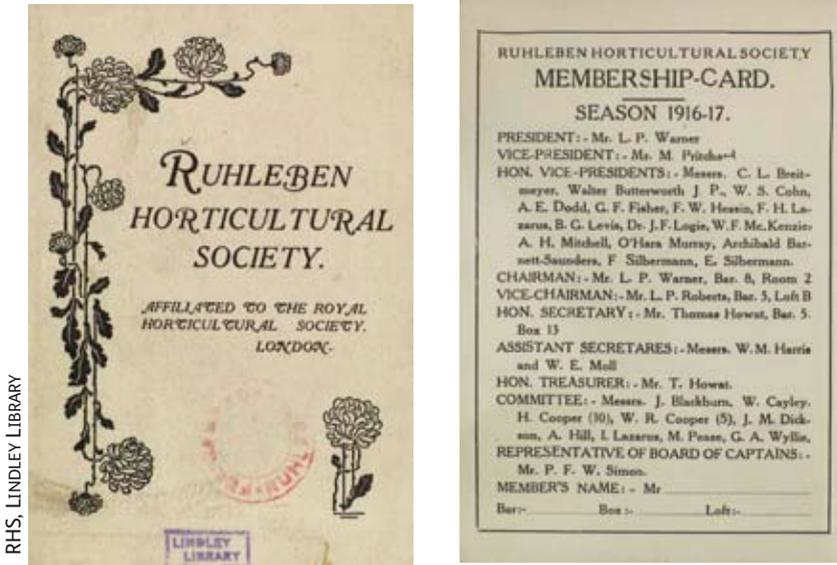
The RHS fed the information to the press. On 21 October 1916 (p. 198) the *Gardeners' Chronicle* announced the creation of the Ruhleben Horticultural Society and its affiliation, and on 20 January 1917 it published a note about the Society, reproducing its membership card and rules (Wilks, 1917). Meanwhile, the effort at organising shipments of seeds was under way, and on 25 November 1916 (p. 257), the *Chronicle* could publish a list of individuals and firms who had supplied seeds, including the great seed houses of Carter and Sutton, Barr and Sons, Kelways, and W.H. Divers, the head gardener at Belvoir Castle.

Individuals

Before we proceed further with the activities of the Horticultural Society, let us see what we can do about introducing the individuals involved.



Figs 2, 3. Above. **Promenade beds.** Below. **Celery trenches.**



Figs 4, 5. Ruhleben Hort. Soc. membership card, recto (left) and verso.

The correspondence with the RHS, and the list of society officials on the 1916–17 membership card reproduced in the *Chronicle*, name numerous people, some of whom now have entries on Chris Paton's website, which also includes information about other members, though frequently it is only their sporting activities which are described.

L.P. Warner, an employee of the Dunlop Tyre Company, was the first President and Chairman. Leonard Plato Roberts, the Vice-chairman, was a teacher who had been visiting Germany to see rose gardens when the War broke out; he gave talks on rose growing for the Ruhleben Horticultural Society, and after the War continued to grow and exhibit roses on an amateur basis. Thomas Howat was both Treasurer and Secretary, assisted by W.M. Harris and W.E. Moll. Thomas Howat (1888–1957) is described as having been a manager before internment. William Medwin Harris (1891–1963) was identified in the 1911 census as a clerk in the Board of Education, but was reportedly working in Germany as a correspondent (journalist) at the time of his arrest; William Edmund Moll (1895–1968) had been a composer.

Vice-Presidents: Matthew Stewart Pritchard (1865–1936) was an art historian specialising in Byzantine art; before the War he had become a friend and supporter of Matisse, and an associate of Roger Fry. Walter Butterworth (1862–1935) had been a councillor in Manchester, and was the Director of Butterworth Brothers, a glass-manufacturing company; he taught classes in Dutch and Danish literature in the camp, and had been in Germany for the Bayreuth Festival. Frank W. Hessin had, since 1904, been working in the Berlin branch of the American musical instrument manufacturer the Aeolian Company, and was in charge of their subsidiary the Choralion Company, whose concert hall was famous for its performances of modern music (such as *Pierrot Lunaire*); after the War he became chairman of the Aeolian Company's British branch. – About the other Vice-Presidents I have as yet been unable to find relevant information.

Other Committee members:

James Blackburn was a professional horticulturist. He had been working as an orchid grower for the Curt Moll nursery in Berlin when he was arrested; on the day of the arrest, Moll wrote a statement of good conduct for him (still preserved by his family) which emphasised his importance to the nursery. He was eventually allowed to continue working at the nursery on day release, and in 1917 he was able to use his contacts in Berlin to buy a second-hand boiler for the camp nursery. After the War he went back to England, but he continued his association with the Moll nursery, breeding carnations.¹

Herbert Cooper was company secretary to Standard Motors in Coventry; Walter Roylands Cooper was an engineer; Alfred Hill had been an assistant in Agricultural Chemistry at the University of Aberdeen before the War. As noted above, Michael Stewart Pease became an eminent geneticist.

There were two other people of horticultural importance, not on the Horticultural Society's committee. George Treseder was a member of the Welsh branch of the Treseder family; his father specialised in dahlias and in 1927 introduced 'Bishop of Llandaff'. George had been working in Frankfurt in order to further his horticultural education at the time of his arrest.² Francis V. Darbishire (1868–1934) had been working at the Berlin Sugar Institute; he gave lectures on botany and chemistry at Ruhleben, and after the War he joined the Royal Horticultural Society as a chemist.

¹ Information provided by Mrs K. Blackburn-Roffey.

² Information from his daughter, Ms Gillian Roe.

He conducted experiments on flower colour, green manures, and the food value of vegetables at Wisley, while analysing soil samples for the Society's Fellows (Wilson, 1934).

Chris Paton's website identifies a couple of additional Horticultural Society members. Oliver James Campbell (1888–1970) had been working as an estate gardener in Germany; he was accused of being a spy, though not convicted; after the War he emigrated to Canada. Thomas Cottrell-Dormer (1894–1990), a student in Germany when War broke out, was born at Rousham, of which he eventually became Lord of the Manor.

Flower gardening and flower shows

In the absence of a formal history of the Ruhleben Horticultural Society, we have to fall back on some brief accounts in memoirs (Powell & Gribble, 1919: 193–6); on an article Howat sent to the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, which was published in the issue of 7 July 1917; on the correspondence of the Society with the RHS; and most notably a typescript report sent to the RHS in September 1917, in response to a request for information about the Society for purposes of a lecture (RHS/Ruh/1/07). The Society also sent the RHS a photograph album (RHS/Ruh/2/2), and a collection of loose photographs, which give our best visual evidence for horticultural activity in the camp.

One of the first matters to which your Committee turned its attention was to procure land for a Nursery, and after some negotiation, permission was obtained to make use of some waste land behind Barrack 10 and the wash-house, comprising in all about 600 sq. yds. This plot was cleared, trenched, treated with drain refuse and tea leaves (manure not being available), and now constitutes a very tolerable nursery (RHS/Ruh/1/07: 1).

Frames were erected as funds allowed, glass no doubt being purchased from outside the camp; by September 1917 there were 56 square yards of frames. In the months after that a pit house (a greenhouse whose floor level is recessed below ground level) was constructed, and a secondhand boiler was purchased (RHS/Ruh/1/08).

The initial purpose seems to have been largely the propagation of ornamental plants for barrack gardens and public thoroughfares: a list of plants gives the following genera: "Lobelia, Pyrethrum, bedding Begonias,



Figs 6, 7. Above. Nursery, interior with pit staff. Below. Nursery with frames.



RHS, LINDLEY LIBRARY

Figs 8, 9. Above. Summer flower show, 1917. Below. Sweet pea exhibits, 1917.

Antirrhinums, Godetia, Clarkia, Petunias, Summer Chrysanthemums, Balsam, Brachycome, Sweet Peas, Marigolds, Mallows, Calliopsis, Asters, Stocks, Nicotiana, Dimorphotheca, Convolvulus, Humulus Japonicus, Nasturtiums, and Hollyhocks” (RHS/Ruh/1/07: 2). Most of these plants could be found in any period list of recommended annuals and bedding plants; brachycome might seem surprising, as a plant whose popularity was mainly early Victorian, but ‘Purple King’ had been a successful Edwardian cultivar, and dimorphotheca might seem surprisingly early, its period of popularity really beginning between the wars, but the Barr and Veitch nurseries were competing to offer a range of *D. aurantiaca* hybrids in the years just before the War (Barr and Sons had sent seeds to Ruhleben, so they were probably the source for the dimorphothecas).

Part of the purpose of affiliation for local horticultural societies was help with the administration and judging of flower shows. The Ruhleben Horticultural Society was no exception: within a few months of seeds from the RHS arriving, a flower show was being arranged. The first flower show was held in the “YMCA Hall” on 7 April 1917. Thomas Howat described the results: “You will be interested to know that we had our first flower show last month, when we staged some 200 pots of spring flowers, which had been grown in frames in the nursery. The exhibition was in every way successful, and was much appreciated by our fellow-prisoners” (Howat, 1917). The results were also reported to the RHS, and on 3 July 1917 Council “decided to make a free gift of one Silver Gilt, one Silver, and one Bronze Affiliated Societies’ Medal, and of the printed Affiliated Societies’ Certificates required for award at the Ruhleben Camp Summer Flower Show and Competition”. A second flower was held on 3–4 August, with a special sweet pea competition; photographs show that the flower shows also included miniature, or “table”, rock gardens, just as the RHS shows in London did, and there is a prize list for table decorations. “The show was well patronised by the Camp and was honoured by a special visit by members of the Netherlands Legation,¹ who expressed great appreciation of the Society’s work. The subsequent sale of plants realised M487.55...”

A word may be in order about the importance ascribed to sweet peas, “our almost national flower” as they had been labelled in the *Ruhleben*

¹ Identified by Powell and Gribble (p. 196) as Baron and Baroness Gevers [Willem Alexander Frederik Baron Gevers (1856–1927), Dutch Ambassador in Berlin 1905–27], and Ridder van Rappart [*sic* = Anthon Gerrit van Rappard (1871–1946), vice-chairman of the Koninklijke MaatschappijTuinbouw en Plantkunde].

Camp Magazine (Forget-Me-Not, 1916). Sweet peas were the pre-eminent floral craze of the Edwardian period, comparable to the craze for dahlias in the early nineteenth century, but not as well illustrated; it is unfortunate that their greatest popularity coincided with the early days of photography as a technique of book illustration rather than lithography, so that they have left behind no great works depicting cultivars. The first significant range of cultivars was produced by Henry Eckford of Wem, Shropshire, in the 1880s; at the end of the century Silas Cole, the head gardener at Althorp, produced 'Countess Spencer', the first sweet pea with a wavy edge; in 1911, the *Daily Mail* offered a prize of £1,000 for the best bunch of sweet peas.¹ The enthusiasm with which they were regarded is well captured in this passage from Walter P. Wright:

And I dream of a sweet-pea garden. This has no old-time flavour. It does not steal into my winter musings with an association of grey, staid orcharding, or of stiff yew alleys and sleepy sundials. It is modern, strenuous, fiercely vital. The flower is in the fire of transformation by the florist, and new varieties pout out hotly, like the editions of evening newspapers. But the exquisite forms and tender tints are a revelation of grace. The wavy "standard," as delicate as a tracery of lace, the curved "wings," tinted and shaped like the ears of nymphs, have all the appealing charm of the soft features of beautiful children (Wright, 1908: 4–5).

Table 1 (p. 55) shows a list of the sweet pea cultivars shown at the summer 1917 flower show.

Forget-Me-Not had offered instructions back in 1916 on growing plants in gardens for the various barracks, and indicated that barrack gardening had already been begun on a small and sporadic scale in 1915. Efforts at barrack gardening were stepped up after the founding of the Horticultural Society, and eventually competitions were held for judging the different gardens.

¹ The prizewinner, the Rev. D. Denholm Fraser of Sprouston, Scotland, published a book on sweet peas, whose title page identified him as the winner (Fraser, 1911). But the report of the prize in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 5 August 1911, p. 90, said that the winner was *Mrs* Fraser.



Figs 10, 11. Above. **Barrack 3**. Below. **Barrack 5**.

Another activity in the Camp which did much to improve things was the Horticultural Society. It began by making little gardens in the compound. These minute patches of colour had a wonderful effect upon the jaded minds of men who had never had a change of view or saw anything that was beautiful. It was very hard work to keep them in order, because the soil – a very fine sand – had been walked on for two years, and its natural lack of fertility had not been improved thereby (Farmer, 1919: 399).

The grouping of the inmates in the different barracks was not entirely random, and the barracks soon developed their own class system and networks of loyalties.

Although there was little to distinguish one barrack from another except its number and location, it was not long before every prisoner thought of himself as belonging to a particular barrack, sharing in its character, and being to that extent differentiated from his fellows elsewhere. He had “belonged” to it of course from his first day, but in only a formal sense; personal identification developed more slowly (Ketchum, 1965: 107).

Ketchum recorded that when the inmates first arrived, the barrack numbers were “empty syllables with no emotional overtones”, but that during the course of 1915 people began identifying with their barracks, shouting the barrack numbers encouragingly during games; and that in the last year or so, the importance of the barracks began to wane as “associations that cut across barrack lines” began to claim more of their attention (Ketchum, 108–11). Some barracks were distinguished by the origin of their inhabitants, with seafarers (Navy or Merchant Marine) making up most of the population of Barrack 9 and half of Barracks 3 and 4, Jews Barrack 6, black inmates in Barracks 13 and 21, and later younger inmates, in their late teens, in Barrack 22. Other barracks were more generally mixed (see Ketchum, 1965: 124–8 for the analysis of barrack populations drawn on here). Barrack 1 was the result of segregation after the original peopling of the camp, and contained those regarded as “pro-German”.

Of those barracks whose gardens there is a photographic record, we may distinguish:

Barrack 3 (see Fig. 10, p. 53), the “supermen” or intellectuals, who became notorious for their enthusiasm for modern art and literature. A photograph

Table 1. Sweet pea cultivars shown at the Ruhleben Horticultural Society flower show, August 1917.

'Agricola'	'Loyalty'
'Anglian Crimson'	'Margaret Atlee'
'Anglian Fairy'	'Melba'
'Anglian Orange'	'Mrs Breadmore'
'Anglian White'	'Mrs Cuthbertson'
'Asta Ohn'	'Mrs Hardcastle'
'Attraction'	'Mrs Heslington'
'Barbara'	'Mrs Reginald Hill'
'Birdbrook'	'Mrs W. J. Unwin'
'Dobbie's Cream'	'Mrs William King'
'Dorothy Eckford'	'Norvic'
'Edith Taylor'	'Nubian'
'Edrom Beauty'	'Othello'
'Edward Cowdy'	'Prince George'
'Elfrida Pearson'	'Princess Mary'
'Elsie Herbert'	'Queen Alexandra'
'Etta Dyke'	'Rosabelle'
'Fiery Cross'	'Rowena'
'Florence Nightingale'	'Royal Purple'
'Helen Pearce'	'Scarlet Emperor'
'Hercules'	'Senator Spencer'
'Ivory King'	'Sunproof Crimson'
'King White'	'Sykes'
'Lady Miller'	'The Lady Eveline'
'Lavender G. Herbert'	'Thomas Stevenson'
'Lord Nelson'	

Note. Some of these are misspelled in the Ruhleben H.S. report.

shows a splendid bed, with a backdrop curtain of climbing plants arranged along a rope, creating a symmetrical pattern, and flowers of medium height, fronted with a row of small ball-headed flowers.

Barrack 5 (see Fig. 11, p. 53), known for prowess in sports. Three photographs in the RHS collection show the gradual development of a collection of climbing plants up the barrack wall, and along a length of trellis erected alongside a wall.

Barrack 7 (see Fig. 12, p. 59), known as the “millionaires’ barrack”. A photograph shows the most elaborate of all the barrack gardens: a series of beds at some distance from the barrack wall, with rustic fencing and trelliswork incorporating a gateway of sorts, most of the uprights draped with climbing plants, and within the bed flowers graded by height, with a row of tall plants running down the centre.

Barrack 8 (see Fig. 13, p. 59), inhabited by a mixture of seafarers and businessmen. “The sailors of Barrack VIII. made a rose-garden, and were very proud of it” (Powell & Gribble, 1919: 193). Two photographs show the presence of washing lines amid the garden; the seafarers generally were noted for practicality. A cartoon in the *Ruhleben Camp Magazine*, of a garden with washing lines offered as a tourist attraction (see Fig. 1, p. 34), was probably based on Barrack 8.

Barrack 9 (see Fig. 16, p. 64), mostly seafarers. A photograph shows climbers on the wall and a small bed under a window: nothing, in other words, that required more horticultural expertise than was provided by Forget-Me-Not’s instructions.

Barrack 10 (see Fig. 17, p. 64), which “contained more dons, students, and schoolboys than any other barrack”. A photograph shows part of a rock garden, with a rustic fence and border of flowers.

The Ruhleben Horticultural Society’s literature did not venture into debates on style; had the gardeners tried to describe their works, their most likely stylistic label would have been “old-world” – the term implying enclosed gardens with a basically formal layout and hardy herbaceous or annual planting. The term had originated in the late nineteenth century for formal, enclosed gardens based loosely on seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century models; by the Edwardian period, as shown by Swinstead’s *My Old World Garden* (Swinstead, 1910), the photographs in which could have furnished the models for the more elaborate Ruhleben gardens, an increasing emphasis on vernacular construction techniques – rustic fencing and pergolas, crazy paving – was leading the style into the domain we now call “arts and crafts”.

Michael Pease had called for the creation of public gardens, to beautify unsightly areas beyond the precincts of the individual barracks, and it is likely that at least part of the Crown Princess’ donation of seeds was put to this purpose. As early as December 1916, the fifth issue of the *Ruhleben Camp Magazine* (Christmas 1916) offered a joke advertisement: “There are still a few vacant spaces in Ruhleben available for pedestrians.

Particulars may be obtained from the Secretary of the Horticultural Society” (p. 4). Public gardens were created in front of the YMCA house, and in the invalids’ barrack; promenade beds were created alongside barbed-wire partitions; and one photograph shows a roughly circular bed created around the base of a central light standard.

The vegetable garden

Later, the Horticultural Society managed to rent the other half of the race-course and turned it into a cabbage patch. Wonderful results attended the careful and industrious work put into this gardening effort; and we were enabled to buy a certain amount of fresh vegetables from time to time, although the supply was never commensurate with the demand (Farmer, 1919: 399).

The British blockade of German ports on the North Sea put pressure on the food supply as early as 1915, when the first forms of rationing were introduced. During the course of 1916, food riots took place in several German cities, and the winter of 1916–17 saw a large-scale failure of the potato crop as a result of frosts. Early gardening ventures at Ruhleben had concentrated largely on the beautification of the camp, but that winter saw the start of a serious programme of food cultivation, which the authorities were probably happy to encourage in order to avoid disease in the camp.

On 12 January 1917 the Horticultural Society decided to apply to the authorities for permission to use part of the land inside the racing track as a vegetable garden; the Captains’ Committee agreed to advance £400 to cover initial expenses; a rent of 100 Marks per month was agreed. Digging began on 29 March. “As regards dung, about 30 loads of a very poor quality pig manure obtained from the Wacht Kommando and from the Fort was all that it was possible to procure, and therefore it was necessary to rely mainly on ten and a half cwts. of Basic Slag, eight cwts. of Bone Meal, eight cwts. 42% Potash Salts per five acres.”

The season was a trying one, the frost being followed almost immediately by a spell of hot dry weather. The effects of this were aggravated by delay in the delivery of watering cans, and sand storms practically wiped out many rows of seedling plants. But the greatest

loss was due to the attacks of insect pests which inevitably follow the breaking up of an old lea, and the Vegetable Garden was spared neither the wire worm nor the cockchafer grub. The crops have also suffered severely from the prevailing plague of "Cabbage White" caterpillars, complete loss of crops was confined to plots 1 and 30, but elsewhere considerable damage was done (RHS/Ruh/1/07: 3).

On 29 January the Society asked for vegetable seeds from the RHS (RHS/Ruh/1/04), and on 13 March 1917 Council agreed. Howat sent letters of thanks to the RHS (RHS/Ruh/1/05) and another which was published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* on 12 May 1917 (p. 195).

Digging operations were commenced on March 29, and were carried out under the supervision of a permanent paid staff of twelve men. About 250 men were employed. The soil was covered with rough grass, and was very sandy, streaked in places with a sandy loam. As soon as digging was finished, lime and artificial manures were hoed in, and sowing operations commenced. Arrangements are being made to procure seeds and manure, and as soon as the crops are off the ground digging operations will be recommenced, thus ensuring the prospects of still better crops next year (Anon.1917).

The RHS donated another shipment of seeds in December 1917, using Sutton's of Reading as their supplier.

A plan of the vegetable garden (see p. 60) shows sections devoted to beetroot, brassica crops (including Brussels sprouts, cauliflowers, and spring cabbage in individual beds), runner beans, dwarf beans, radishes, turnips, spinach, lettuce, carrots, beets, parsnips, onions, leeks, and celery; one of the parsnip beds is marked "(failed)". We do not have a comprehensive cultivar list for the vegetables sent, but a partial list can be derived from the list of vegetables that were given awards at the August 1917 flower show (see Table 2, p. 62).¹

It is possible that the willingness of the camp authorities to turn such a large area of the camp over to the vegetable growing was influenced in part

¹ It is interesting that in 1915 the RHS organised a shipment of vegetable seeds for Serbia, the list of which was published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* (Anon., 1915). There is only one cultivar that appears on both lists: cabbage 'Enfield Market'.



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Figs 12, 13. Above. **Barrack 7**. Below. **Barrack 8**.

by the hope that they could receive part of the produce themselves. If so, they were disappointed. Powell and Gribble tell the following anecdote:

During my absence from the camp, Captain Amelunxen demanded fifteen red cabbages for the officers' mess, and also gave an order that all outer cabbage leaves must be delivered to serve as cattle fodder. This at a time when red cabbages were hardly procurable for love or money in Berlin. The Horticultural Society laid the matter before the captains; and the captains decided unanimously that, as the cabbages had been grown from seed supplied from England on the specific understanding that only the interned men were to benefit, the officers' mess must go without its fifteen red cabbages. As for the leaves, he was told that he might have them in exchange for manure to be supplied by German cattle. On that condition they were duly handed over; but I have reason to believe that they were intercepted on their way to the cattle, and eaten (Powell & Gribble, 1919: 195).

Farewell to Ruhleben

"You English seem to set to work as if you were founding a new colony", said one official (Masterman, 1975: 103), and this sentiment was shared by some at least of the inmates, one describing the camp as "a British Colony under foreign control" (Farmer, 1919: 396). By the end the camp administrators seemed to be proud of the achievements of the inmates under their rule. In the summer of 1916 the Camp Commandant, Count Schwerin, said to a visitor from the American Embassy, "You mustn't suppose that the camp was always like this. When the men were first brought here, the place wasn't fit to keep pigs in. All that you have admired in the camp they have themselves created" (Powell & Gribble, 1919: v – acknowledging this as "the generous tribute of an enemy whom Ruhleben men had ceased to think of as an enemy before he died").¹

The Horticultural Society had grand plans for increasing the output of the vegetable garden in 1919, but it turned out that it was not required. On 11 November the War was officially ended, and little over a week later, a large proportion of the internees in Ruhleben was bound for home. The

¹ Gerd Graf von Schwerin-Sophienhof (1857–1916), Chamberlain to the Kaiser before becoming Camp Commandant. For a testimonial to his character, see also Masterman 1975: 102.

Table 2. Vegetable cultivars shown at the Ruhleben Horticultural Society flower show, August 1917.

Bean	'Ryder's Climbing French', 'Simpson's Eldorado', 'Sutton's Canadian Wonder', 'Sutton's Scarlet Runner'
Beetroot	'Carter's Selected Crimson Globe'
Cabbage	'Enfield Market'
Celery	'Sutton's Solid White'
Cucumber	'Dobbie's Telegraph', 'Sutton's King George', 'Sutton's Matchless'
Endive	Ryder's
Kohlrabi	Ryder's
Lettuce	'Carter's All the Year Round', 'Simpson's Ohio', 'Sutton's Superb White'
Marrow	15 varieties, unspecified
Onion	Mixed varieties
Pea	'Kent & Brydon's Bell'
Potato	'Factor'
Radish	Several varieties
Tomato	'Sutton's Holmes Supreme', 'Sutton's Princess of Wales', 'Sutton's Best of All'
Turnip	'Carter's Snowball', 'Kelway's American Purple Top', 'Sutton's Golden Ball'

political situation in Germany at the time of their departure was confused and volatile; two days before the armistice it was announced that the Kaiser had abdicated, but this was not made official until 28 November, and in the meantime the country was without an acknowledged head of state. As the Ruhleben inmates went to their ships, they were handed republican propaganda leaflets, which included an apology for their detention and the statement: "Do not hold the German people responsible for it. They have suffered more than you. For you the English Government provides amply". The *Times* published the text of the leaflet under the title "Silly German Propaganda" (*Times*, 28 November 1918, p. 7d). On that same day the late edition carried the news that the first 1500 internees had landed at Hull.



Fig. 15. Certificate presented by the Ruhleben Horticultural Society to the RHS.



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Figs 16, 17. Above. Barrack 9. Below. Barrack 10.

The experience of the return home was a move from one camp to another: reception camps were set up at Ripon, Dover, and Canterbury to house repatriated prisoners of war, military and civilian, and nurse them to health if need be before discharging them. Horticultural careers, professional or amateur, beckoned to some of the former inmates, but in most of the cases I know of they had already been engaged in horticulture before the War. David Tulloch, an engineer on the *SS Rubislaw* before his capture, joined the Ruhleben Horticultural Society, and ever after maintained an amateur interest in gardening, which he passed on to his descendants, including a great-grandson who holds an allotment and a great-granddaughter who is a garden designer.¹ It would be interesting to learn of others whose first experience of gardening was at Ruhleben, who were moved by it to a change of career.

The camp reverted to its former racing purposes after the War, and in 1958 the site was cleared for conversion to a sewage plant.

¹ Information from his grand-daughter Mrs Doreen Black.

The author would like to thank all those families who have contacted the RHS Lindley Library with information about their relatives who were interned at Ruhleben, some of whom have been acknowledged in the text; also Fiona Davison, Head of Libraries, for her energy and effort in tracking down Ruhleben connections; and Liz Taylor, RHS Archivist, for her work on the Ruhleben archives held in the Lindley Library.

Also, of course, to Richard Sanford for all his efforts with making this text presentable and error-free.

Appendix: German prisoners of war in England

Civilian internment camps were not a feature of German practice alone: many camps were set up in the United Kingdom, under the auspices of both the War Office and the Home Office. It is only recently that these camps have become the object of academic study (Panayi, 1993; Panayi, 2012), and so far there has been no study of horticultural activity within them. So what follows is a sketchy outline based on meagre documentation, with a plea to others to investigate further.

The first internment camp in England was established at Dorchester in August 1914, more or less as soon as the Aliens Restriction Act was passed; the first thousand prisoners had been settled there by the end of August, and the population rose to 4,500 at its peak – considerably larger than the population of the town (Meech, 2014; Bates, 2014). Additional camps were soon scattered around the country, and in the Isle of Man. One Ruhleben inmate, contrasting the entrepreneurial spirit of the English with the temperament of the Germans, quoted an observer of a German camp in England as having

described how the poor Germans sat down and bemoaned their fate and could only keep their spirits up by singing German patriotic songs. That was not the sort of thing that happened at Ruhleben. In the first place we were not allowed to sing patriotic songs, and in the second place we had no desire to do so (Farmer, 1919: 396).

Whether the apathy and depression suggested here really characterised German prisoners, however, at least after the initial months in captivity, may be doubted.

The most important memoir of life in a prisoner-of-war camp in Britain was an account of the camp at Skipton in Yorkshire, compiled by Fritz Sachsse and Paul Nikolaus Cossmann in 1920. As is usual with such accounts, far more space is devoted to sporting activities than to horticulture, but they do quote a substantial passage from a prisoner named Ebert, describing the development of gardening in the camp:

The gorgeous warm days of May sparked an extraordinary urge to make small gardens in the camp. Everywhere spades and rakes were busy, in a heated struggle to bring the land around the barracks under cultivation, in most cases to fill the belly in that time of “starvation”,



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Figs 18, 19. Above. Allotments at Alexandra Palace. Below. The vegetable garden at Eastcote. Photos. Anon., 1916/1917.



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Figs 20, 21. Above. The main street at Lofthouse Park. Below. A chalet in the gardens at Lofthouse Park. Photos. Anon., 1916/1917.

but also for a show of flowers to delight the eye. Who could count the amount of radish and garden cress, which disappeared from those beds into our stomachs? A little more forethought, and soon lettuce and cabbage plantations appeared along the barracks. Some comrades developed into large-scale cultivators. I can recall the “potato field” of one comrade, and the large-scale enterprise of two others: while barrack 28 was more of an allotment, barracks 18 and 27 were worked in a cooperative mode, with one working and the other harvesting. There was also an allotment operation at the headquarters barracks, before whose windows the occupants’ earlier activities could be seen in the form of cress beds in the shape of submarines and anchors. One comrade could boast the largest and most intensive enterprise, one saw him “ploughing” in all corners of the camp. He even set up an experimental station for the rearing of all sick and otherwise discarded plants, which he affectionately treated with “Pferdeäppeln”.

As always happens in small-scale gardening, there soon sprang up in the camp those vital places for fresh air recreation. One could take midday naps on lawn benches (while supposedly ‘working hard’) in cosy nests under the hawthorn hedges, others couldn’t separate themselves from the dugouts and foxholes so cherished during the war (see barrack 32, “The hunter’s grave”)¹, while at barrack 27 even an M.-G.-Stand [Maschinengewehr-Stand] could be seen, whose wire entanglement seemed an utter failure, but was densely camouflaged behind flowers and cabbages. The grotto in front of barrack 28 revealed a training in garden architecture, while at barrack 17 a small amphitheatre had appeared, intended for bowling and musical evenings, though in the continual rainy season of the later months it was flooded. However, the main force in garden construction was undoubtedly our Executive Director, who, undeterred by ridicule and insult, laid a piece of turf, created grass courts under the ash trees, installed benches on the lawns, designed ornamental squares, and

¹ Reference to a German song of the First World War, “Das Jägergrab”, with its lines

Auf einem Jägergrab, da blühen keine Rosen

Auf einem Jägergrab, da blüht das Edelweiss.

“On the hunter’s grave there are no roses, / On the hunter’s grave there is edelweiss...”

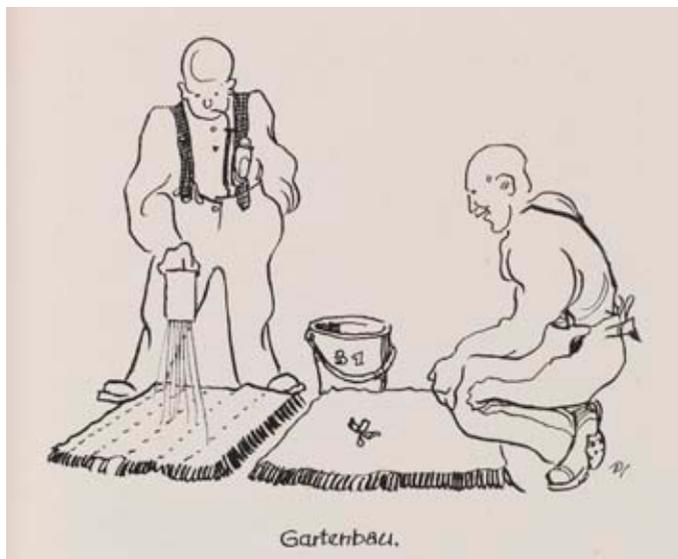
with limitless patience repaired the continually disordered paths .
“Adorn your home!” seemed to be his motto.

It was a pity that the unfavourable weather did not let the care and hard work that were visible everywhere come properly to fruition. (Sachsse & Cossmann, 1920: 88–90).

In 1916, an exhibition about the War (the Württemberg Kriegsausstellung) was held in Stuttgart, and the American Ambassador in Berlin requested that the British government supply some photographs of prisoner-of-war camps in Britain. The photographs were published in a volume entitled *German Prisoners in Great Britain*, issued by a printer in Bolton without a publisher’s name or date of publication (1916 or 1917 presumably). Six camps were depicted, and in each of them there was photographic evidence of gardening activity: Dorchester; Donington Hall, in Leicestershire, where “Officers are allowed to cultivate and grow their own flowers”; Handforth, near Wilmslow in Cheshire, which was opened in November 1914 and soon held 3,000 prisoners, and was illustrated by two photographs of Unter-Offiziers watering plants; Lofthouse Park (a failing amusement park in Wakefield when it was annexed), which was illustrated with views of chalets with individual front gardens; Eastcote, Northamptonshire (opened in February 1916 for civilian internees, but by April of that year also taking military prisoners), which provided views of a highly elaborate flower garden, complete with watermill; and Alexandra Palace, of which more later (Anon., 1916/17). All this suggests an interest in horticulture comparable to that shown at Ruhleben – but with this difference, that there is no evidence of any programme of subsidy from the German government or German horticultural organisations to help with the development of gardens.

Just as James Blackburn was eventually allowed on day release from Ruhleben to help with the Curt Moll nursery, so civilian horticulturists in the British camps could sometimes find external work. The most famous example is Walter Ingwersen, who had worked for Clarence Elliott before the War, and who was interned on the Isle of Man; he was released on parole to the Royal Horticultural Society to help with the maintenance of the rock garden at Wisley. But Thomas Hardy also obtained the services of a gardener from the Dorchester camp to help at Max Gate (Meech, 2014); how many other instances were there?

The cultivation of food crops came surprisingly late in the history of the British internment camps, just as at Ruhleben: presumably the introduction



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Figs 22, 23. Above. German prisoners gardening, by an unidentified artist. Below. A street in the camp. (From Sachsse & Cossmann, 1920.)

of blockades in 1916 helped motivate both inmates and administration to increase the amount of food that could be provided within the camp. The last of the internment camps to be established by the War Office was at Alexandra Palace, in north London; this is also the camp whose history has been written in the greatest detail so far (Harris, 2005: 63–122), and it shows, first, that inmates were employed to maintain the grounds of the Palace, and second, that the initiative of growing food in allotments came from the camp administration rather than from the prisoners themselves:

Some prisoners found work in their former occupations, being re-engaged by their old employers working in their trades, mainly watchmakers and die-sinkers. The men received trade-union rates, from which the government deducted 2s. 6d. weekly for their keep. Other men found employment with the Alexandra Palace Trust, some as gardeners while others maintained the Palace's roads and paths. Each received 4s. 6d. per week.

For those men of no particular talent or skill, the hours hung heavily. Before his death Lt Col Frowde-Walker experimented with giving interested prisoners a small plot of land which each could cultivate to his own taste. At first, only about eighty men could obtain such an allotment. The experiment was such a success that the following year over 400 plots were given to the men, but again supply outstripped demand. Busy the whole day through in their gardens, what was achieved was remarkable. Some cultivated flowers, while others grew vegetables (Harris, 2005: 96–97).

Eventually the government decided to use prisoners of war to help make up the deficiency in the agricultural labour force caused by conscription. On 8 December 1917 (p. 231), the *Gardeners' Chronicle* reported that "The total number of prisoners of war working in agriculture is now 5,063. Schemes for the employment of a further 1,400 men are about to be started." By March 1918 (16 March 1918, p. 115), the total had risen to nearly 9,000. Two months later (18 May 1918, p. 210) the *Chronicle* republished an extract from the *Daily Telegraph* about the quality of the resulting work:

... the farming community has been vividly impressed with the excellent work that is being accomplished by German prisoners whose services have been utilised on the land. The almost unanimous verdict of the farmer able to judge is that the German prisoner is 'thorough' in his

agricultural work. As for cleaning land, and getting it into goodly appearance, many farmers testify that the German (and Austrian) prisoner has done excellent work. The cry is for still more men to be used in the countless odd jobs necessary in agriculture. There is existing the machinery for putting far more prisoners of war on the land than there are at the moment. Some farmers have complained that the wages paid to Germans are too high – they are ruled by the current local rate, subject to a deduction of 15s. per week for board and lodging – but with British labourers growing fewer it would be better for agriculture if even more men were liberated from the German camps or agricultural depôts already instituted. Clearing ditches, laying drains, carting roots, cutting logs, threshing, and ploughing, are farm work in which the German prisoner excels. Farmers who have had the assistance of prisoners formerly used to agricultural duties have loudly proclaimed that their land was never so clean as it is at the moment.

Edwin Molyneux, the celebrated head gardener at Swanmore Park in Hampshire (one of the original recipients of the Victoria Medal of Honour in 1897), reported on the use of POW labour on that estate:

Although so much extra land has lately come under arable cultivation, the work is well in hand, thanks in great measure to the employment of German prisoners of war. I have nothing but good to say for these men, both for manual and for horse labour. At first they were strange to our methods of procedure, but they quickly adapted themselves to circumstances, and now they make very good ploughmen. They are also excellent hoers, assiduous in their work, and quick to learn. They plant out most carefully 70,000 onions that were raised in boxes. Some few farmers had at first an objection to their employment, but this feeling quickly gave way to wise counsels, and now the supply in this district is inadequate to the demand. The Government has certainly equipped them with excellent material, ploughs, harrows, rollers, drills, and harvest appliances (Molyneux, 1918).

The Wartime Memories Project (www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/pow) is accumulating information on all the First World War prison camps, civilian and military; we may look forward to increasing information being made available in the near future.

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Bolshevism in the garden

BRENT ELLIOTT

c/o The Lindley Library, the Royal Horticultural Society, London

Look first upon this passage:

The large private gardens of the past are in the majority of cases not resuming former dimensions; consequently less labour is employed; former moderate-sized gardens have become reduced in many cases to single-handed gardens; whilst single-handed gardens of the past, in many cases, employ a jobbing hand a few days a week. This must and does mean a large displacement of labour, and whilst there are less good private gardens, there are more applicants for a job. This latter factor, coupled with the private gardener's lack of initiative to organise (happily disappearing to some extent), keeps wages deplorably low and conditions generally little better than in pre-war days (Fletcher, 1919).

...and on this:

In a short time we might have three-quarters of Europe converted to Bolshevism ... Great Britain would hold out, but only if the people were given a sense of confidence ... We had promised them reforms time and again, but little had been done. We must give them the conviction this time that we meant it, and we must give them that conviction quickly...

Even if it cost a hundred million pounds, what was that compared to the stability of the State? (Lloyd George, 3 March 1919, quoted in Swenarton, 1981: 78).

At the end of the First World War, there was a short-lived frenzy of correspondence in the British gardening press about the threat of Bolshevism in the garden. Although it had no lasting consequences, it is an interesting moment in the history of gardening that has not hitherto been explored, beyond a single paragraph in my history of the RHS (Elliott, 2004: 328–329); the centenary of the outbreak of the War provides a good opportunity to tell the story in more detail.

Gardens fit for heroes?

The last two years of the War saw growing civil unrest on the home front, culminating in a series of strikes in May 1917, which greatly alarmed the government. The immediate concern was to keep the steady supply of munitions flowing; so in June a commission of enquiry was set up to report on what was prompting the strikes. The two great issues mentioned were food (this was during the period of rationing) and the lack of sufficient housing. This second matter seized the attention of Lloyd George and his colleagues, and as the War drew to its end, the focus shifted from the existing industrial workforce to the population of armed forces who would one day return to Britain. The news of the revolution in Russia was causing alarm to governments everywhere: if the returning soldiers and sailors found only slums waiting for them, might they not catch the Bolshevik spirit and attempt a similar revolution here? In January 1919 there was a strike among shipbuilders and engineers in Glasgow, culminating in a major riot; Robert Munro, the Secretary of State for Scotland, said that “it was a misnomer to call the situation in Glasgow a strike – it was a Bolshevik rising”. In July, in Luton, a proposed celebration of the peace treaty was boycotted by two federations of ex-servicemen, and the result was a riot and the looting of the town hall. The Home Office warned that if revolutionary attitudes should develop on a large scale among returning servicemen, “for the first time in history the rioters will be better trained than the troops” (quotes from Swenarton, 1981: 77–78).

And so began the “Homes for Heroes” campaign, by which the government attempted to nip revolutionary sympathies in the bud by providing improved housing for returning soldiers. Before the War, local authorities were responsible for the building of 2% of new dwellings erected; during the years 1919–1923, this figure rose to more than 60%. The story of the campaign has been told from the architectural point of view (Swenarton, 1981; Swenarton, 2008: 13–28, 41–57); is there a horticultural point of view?

The prototype for the new housing estates was the Well Hall Estate in Eltham, built to house the munitions workers at Woolwich. Frank Baines, the designer, put its architectural principles to use in the subsequent estates for returning soldiers: houses in short rows or semi-detached, a picturesque mixture of building finishes depending on the materials locally available. Well Hall had been undertaken directly by the Ministry of Works; the following estates, created under the Housing and Town

Planning Act 1919, were largely undertaken by borough councils with advice from the Ministry. The debates over the Housing and Town Planning Bill (passed in 1919) revealed that the intended domestic improvement had a horticultural side. Pemberton Billing, MP for Hertford, provided the rationale for the programme by saying “If a man is comfortably housed... you will not find much unrest there”, while E.G. Pretyman, MP for Chelmsford and the former Civil Lord of the Admiralty, said:

If there is one part of these proposals that appeals to me ... it is that houses shall be provided in semi-rural conditions with good garden plots and good transport access to the work in which the man is engaged, so that he can do his work in the factory while his family can live in fresh air ... and where, when he gets home at night, he will find not only a healthy family, but healthy occupation outside where they can go and work together in the garden. As one who knows what it means, I say that that will do more than any other part of this legislation (quoted in Swenarton, 1981: 85–86).

Public discussions of the Homes for Heroes estates tended to overlook the nature of the gardens that were to accompany and provide the setting for the houses. Perhaps it was assumed that with Raymond Unwin’s *Town Planning in Practice* (1909) and Angus Webster’s *Town Planting* (1910) still on the bookshelves, there was sufficient information accessible for local authorities and/or the residents to manage without directives. The *Gardeners’ Chronicle* published a letter from an associate of Ebenezer Howard’s in the garden city movement, recommending that the new houses should have gardens that were broad and short rather than long and narrow; that they should be equipped with fruit trees and bushes trained on cordons; and that they should have palings rather than hedges, whose root systems would “in a few years’ time ... monopolise all fertility of the borders around the garden and sadly limit, if not ruin, expectations of crops” (Raschen, 1919) – advice followed nowhere to my knowledge.

The only Homes for Heroes estate with whose archives I am familiar is the Casino Estate in Camberwell, and the explicit references to the creation of gardens are limited to a statement that privet hedges would be planted (Borough of Camberwell Housing Committee Minutes, 24 February 1921) and that turf for grass plots would be obtained from a works site in Herne Hill (17 March 1921). On the other hand, the regulations issued

to the tenants imposed some standards of behaviour in the garden: “The ground at the rear of the houses is to be the only drying ground and tenants shall not hang from their windows or in any way expose to public view any washing or unsightly objects whatever.” “Refuse must not be thrown from the windows or doors but must be deposited in the bins placed for the purpose.” “No cutting or lopping of trees without permission” (14 April 1921).

The Casino Estate is particularly interesting, first as the only example of a collaboration between the Ministry of Works and a borough council in creating an estate (and of course things did not run smoothly under this divided authority), and secondly as an example of the treatment of an historic garden. The property was originally The Casina, a house built by Nash with grounds by Repton, that had fallen into decay; it was arranged that the Ministry of Health would buy the property from the governors of Dulwich College, and that Camberwell would then acquire it by compulsory purchase, and make it available for the Office of Works to build upon (22 January 1920). But at the lower end of the property was an ornamental lake, fringed with trees, and at the request of Dulwich College it was decided to retain this as a public open space (renamed Sunray Gardens). The minutes for 10 February 1920 show both the scope and the limits of the Council’s intentions:

The trees not interfered with by the layout and house development to be retained, and those upon the Red Post Hill frontage not to be cut down without the consent of the College authorities.

The garden at the southern end of the Estate to be included in the lease, the lessees agree to maintain it as an open space with free access to the public during the term of the lease.

The land shall be used only for the purpose of private dwelling houses or flats.

The names of Nash and Repton were mentioned nowhere in the Council’s deliberations. But then Nash’s reputation was at its nadir in the early twentieth century; Summerson’s biography lay fifteen years in the future; and while Repton’s reputation had not sunk so low – an American edition of his selected writings had been published in 1907 – it was not yet something to conjure with. That part of the Repton landscape was preserved was an unintended consequence of a desire to furnish public amenity space with minimum expenditure. Some of the tree planting elsewhere in the grounds

was also preserved where useful; the only correspondence preserved from a tenant about the garden provided was a request to be allowed to fell two trees which were making the tenant's garden "useless" (2 March 1921). The Council had quite enough to cope with over the issues of drainage, frozen pipes, smoking grates, window fastenings working loose, cracks in walls, etc.

The Casino Estate went severely over the original budget of £275,000 for 290 houses. Reductions to the original plans were made during the course of works; the intended Hall of Recreation was abandoned; Frank Baines' elaborate proposals for road paving were trimmed down.¹ The *Builder* published a leader concluding that the results of the estate-building project were incommensurate with the expenditure:

... the net result of the Government's scheme, after a very generous period for trial, is that a few thousand houses have been built, and often indifferently built, at very high cost, which even if let at rents which those for whom they were intended can in many cases certainly not afford to pay, will leave the tax-payer and rate-payer under a heavy burden for years to come. We have all, during a period of quite unreal prosperity, opened our mouths too wide, and now we have to face the inevitable result. What is the lesson? A nation cannot supply free houses any more than it can supply free clothing outfits. Houses must be built as a paying business concern, and this is the fundamental principle to be accepted (15 July 1921).

The *Builder's* complaint would eventually become widely accepted. In the autumn of 1920, a projected strike of miners, railway and transport workers, which the government feared might lead to a general strike, was aborted; when the miners called another strike at the end of March 1921, a state of emergency was declared and the armed forces mobilised; after other unions failed to join in, the strike was called off on 15 April. The following month, cuts in public spending were proposed, and in June the Homes for Heroes programme officially came to an end.

¹ Baines' proposal (minutes, 13 April 1920) specified, for roads, 12" of hardcore, topped with 4" of flints in two layers, and for footpaths, 1" of asphalt and 4" of concrete, with 12" x 8" kerbs of Norway granite and 12" x 6" granite channels on 6" of concrete. The Council's alternative for footpaths was 2" of tar paving or a patent artificial two-inch paving.

Local authorities continued to commission housing estates – those created by the London County Council have been the best studied. The ideas of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker governed the planning of most estates in the 1920s, but during the 1930s there was a progressive move from houses to flats and an increasing attempt to adapt states to urban rather than suburban standards (Elliott, 2000). It was not until after the Second World War that a manual on estate planning was published (Stanley Gale's *Modern Housing Estates*, 1949) that gave detailed consideration to horticultural aspects.

This is part of the background against which the flurry of agitation about trade unionism in the garden took place.

The British Gardeners' Association: early history

As it was the British Gardeners' Association that was the focus of the agitation, let me give an account of the founding and prewar history of this now largely forgotten organisation.

The initial proposal was made by William Henry Divers, who had succeeded the great William Ingram as head gardener at Belvoir Castle (and would soon publish *Spring Flowers at Belvoir Castle*, 1909, the best source of illustrations for spring bedding patterns). In October 1903, he made the following proposal:

I would ... suggest that an Association of Head Gardeners of the United Kingdom be formed, to meet at least once a year for the discussion of various matters connected with the profession, with a view of raising it from the confused state into which it is drifting. In making this proposal I have no wish to introduce any trade unionism into our ranks; but I think much good might be done socially, professionally, and from an education point of view ... Most of the professions and trades are now united in some way, why should gardening remain in such a disorganised state? I may be told that we have various societies connected with the profession, but I fail to see how any of them could take up additional work. The Royal Horticultural Society has too many other subjects claiming its attention, and were it not so there are reasons why it cannot do anything in this way. I think there remains no remedy but to set bravely to work and help ourselves (Divers,1903).

Interest was provoked, and meetings assembled in December and February. There was some opposition, generally anonymous – the *Chronicle* published

a letter (16 April 1904, p. 249) from an opponent who thought that the unemployed would embrace such an organisation, but “they will scarcely expect the more fortunate to assist at a game not unlike that known as the ‘confidence trick’” – but most of the responses were favourable.

The result was the British Gardeners’ Association, formally inaugurated in June 1904 (see the account of the inaugural meeting in the *Chronicle*, 4 June 1904, pp. 366–367, and the prospectus, published 11 June pp. 376–377). Divers was the first Head of Council; John Weathers, the former Assistant Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society, was the Secretary. Divers recommended all head gardeners in the country to join the Association. By the time of the second annual meeting, in May 1906, Maxwell T. Masters, the editor of the *Gardeners’ Chronicle*, could congratulate Divers on the success of his organisation. The names of its executive in its early years comprise a roster of the great and the good in gardening: T.H. Candler, one of Ellen Willmott’s gardeners at Warley Place; G.L. Caselton, the superintendent of Crystal Palace Park; Charles H. Curtis, the editor of the *Gardeners’ Magazine* (and eventually of the *Chronicle* and of the *Orchid Review*); Herbert J. Cutbush, the Highgate nurseryman; Charles Foster, then horticultural instructor at Reading, and later the director of the *Times* Experimental Station at Guildford; William Hales of the Chelsea Physic Garden; Elderbert F. Hawes, the superintendent of the Royal Botanic Society’s garden in Regent’s Park, and later the Secretary of both the National Dahlia and Chrysanthemum Societies; R. Hooper Pearson, who would succeed Masters as editor of the *Chronicle*; and Walter P. Wright, editor of *The Gardener*. Among the active members were Alexander Dean, the seedsman and journalist; W.W. Pettigrew, then superintendent of parks in Cardiff, who succeeded in getting the council to recognise the B.G.A. certificate and increase the wages of his staff; and a clutch of Kew staff, including the curator William Watson and his assistant C.P. Raffill.

In May 1907 appeared the first number of the Association’s *Journal*, which was issued on a nearly monthly basis until wartime exigencies of finance began to bite nearly a decade later.¹ It contained a certain number

¹ The RHS Lindley Library does not have a set of the *Journal*, later retitled *The British Gardener*, but copies can be examined at the British Library. – Should anyone out there have a set and be willing to donate it to the RHS, we would be most grateful for this splendid gift. If anyone has some specimen issues they would be willing to donate, that would still help to fill a most annoying gap.

of articles on gardening, but the core of each issue was an account of the growth of the Association, and the formation of regional branches.

Divers had insisted that his proposed organisation had nothing to do with trade unionism. William Watson was equally emphatic about his hopes for the Association:

Mr. WATSON explained the treatment of gardeners at Kew as democratic. If a man at Kew would work as well as the Curator he was esteemed equally with him. But gardening had become very largely a “dumping ground for duffers.” This should not be permitted to continue. He would make a fence around the profession, and provide a door through which every member would have to pass, or choose some other vocation (quoted in *Gardeners’ Chronicle*, 27 February 1904: 136).

The sort of sociological study that would either confirm or rebut Watson’s accusation has yet to be carried out. I have drawn attention to what I described as an “attack on the gardener” in the last third of the nineteenth century (Elliott, 1986: 214–216), drawing on writers who called for the gardener to be kept more thoroughly under the employer’s thumb and not allowed to get above his station. Such writers were appealing largely to a middle-class audience; on great country estates the head gardener occupied a useful tier in the management structure. The second and third quarters of the century had seen the rise of the gardener to something approaching professional recognition. Not every gardener could hope to rise in the social scale as far as Paxton, who had ended his days with a knighthood and a seat in Parliament, but all could hope to be pulled some distance in his wake; a favourite example of mine is John Spencer, the head gardener at Bowood, who continued in that role even while being the director of a bank on the side. When, in the 1840s, the young D.T. Fish had been offered a position at a salary of £30 per year, he had exploded, “Why couple the knowledge and culture of professional men with the rewards of a livery servant?” (Fish, 1875: 655). Gardeners during the 1860s and 1870s would have had the gratifying feeling that their status as skilled professionals was increasingly being recognised; but by the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation seemed to have returned to its early Victorian baseline.

Divers and Watson may have hoped that the Association would improve professional status and avoid trade unionism; but in the very first issue

of the *British Gardener* the signs of trade unionism were there. Colonel Sexby, the superintendent of parks for the London County Council, had announced that candidates for a post (4th Class Superintendent) would be confined to those who had passed the RHS examination in practical horticulture. A correspondent attacked the restriction:

As might be expected this is viewed with extreme disfavour by many of the men. Surely it amounts to a grave injustice that the promotion of gardeners who may long have been in the employ of the council should in future depend in a great measure upon their theoretical knowledge and capacity with the pen (Garnett, 1907).

The following year, when T.S. Dymond, Inspector in Education¹, wrote that gardeners would not make good teachers of nature study, another correspondent launched an attack:

“The professional gardener... rarely possesses the experience necessary to control the work of a class of boys, nor has he often the scientific knowledge or the attitude of mind necessary to make gardening a nature-study. *His aim is merely to grow fine crops.* It is only when gardening is taught by a school teacher that it can be correlated with other school subjects to the best advantage.”

What do you think of that you intelligent gardeners? Is it not grand that one of H. M. Inspectors should be paid a high salary to dish up such matter for the Board of Education, and to have it printed at the expense of the country? ...

Gardeners are getting sick and tired of the airs put on by ignorant officials from the Board of Education and from the Board of Agriculture, and it is about time that men who knew their business had a turn (J. 1908).

And whether the Association felt itself to be a trade union, it was certainly regarded in that light by a certain number of employers. In December 1913, the solicitor Sir William Crump, who had a garden at a suburban villa in Harrow Weald, on learning that his gardeners had joined

¹ Thomas Southall Dymond (1861–1949), author of *The Education of the Cottage and Market Gardener in England* (1907) and *Suggestions on Rural Education* (1908).

the Association, gave them twenty-four hours' notice "to choose between their positions and their craft organisation". Cyril Harding, the Association's then Secretary, wrote to Crump saying that there had been "no previous instance of an employer taking this step". Crump replied, "I decline to discuss the matter in question with a stranger. I was quite entitled if I wished to give my men notice to terminate their engagement. // I do not desire to be troubled further in the matter and you must therefore treat this letter as ending the correspondence. // Yours obediently, Wm. J. Crump".

Though Sir William Crump may very wisely not desire to be troubled further in the matter, his wish is not likely to be gratified. We cannot of course address him directly again, but every fair-minded man will acknowledge that whilst keeping within the law and doing his best, as he deems it, for the privileges of his class Sir William has overstepped the bounds which employers should observe if they wish to be intelligently and loyally served (Harding, 1914).

A fund was started for the three dismissed gardeners (Divers gave ten shillings), and they had all been found new positions within three months.¹

Labour unrest among gardeners at the end of the War

The War put an end to these matters temporarily; enlistment, conscription, and the campaign for improved food production dominated the lives of gardeners for a few years. One member later wrote, "I was a member ... until I joined His Majesty's Forces. From that time the British Gardeners' Association had nothing to do with me" (Hartless, 1920: 159).

But the unrest that began to appear in other walks of life in 1917 spread into gardening as well. By this time there was a sizeable contingent of the Association who regarded themselves as the equivalent of trade unionists. Divers was no longer at the helm; the only member of the administration who had been there since the early years was E.F. Hawes. In May 1917 the Association held a ballot on whether it should apply for registration under

¹ Dismissals of gardeners did not usually attract the attention of the gardening press. One earlier instance that deserves to be remembered occurred in 1906 when one Edwin Layton dismissed three gardeners for voting Liberal. "Mr. Layton said that he did not wish to be hard, and if the three gardeners had not anything to do they need not hurry away" (*Gardeners' Chronicle*, 21 July 1906, p. 59).

the Trade Union Acts. In 1918 the Association's *Journal* changed its title to *The British Gardener*, and the first issue under the new title led with this affirmation of trade unionism as the way forward:

At least the gardener has been aroused from his slumbers, and is realising that the trade union movement is the movement through which he can seek his own salvation....

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary our pastors and masters would have us believe that there has been a general reformation of morals, a subduing of the greed and passion for wealth and power that are responsible for this war, an awakening to the uprighteousness of the exploitation of the human soul, to the dishonour that darkens the profiteer from shady business.

But we have not to search very diligently to find that this conversion is not real. ...

Too long has he been under-rated and poorly paid. Too long has the world in general failed to see the duty he performs, and has kept from him (through being ignorant of the real worth of the spade, and the knowledge required to use it aright) the rights he has earned. Too long has he been willing to remain silent. And a great part of the blame is due to his insufficient self esteem and self valuation – an inveterate gardener's failing (Darwood, 1918).

At the end of 1918, it was reported that gardeners in south Wales were agitating for increased wages; in March 1919, that gardeners in the Bristol area had decided to form a branch of the National Union of General Workers. The British Gardeners' Association may have been peeved at this. W. Chivers, a Leeds gardener, responded: "Bravo Bristol! The first point to decide is the union: one district should not be in one Union and the next in another. So the first thing to be done is to arrange meetings in the villages and other centres, and let other gardeners know which Union is best" (*Gardeners' Chronicle*, 15 March 1919: 129). The more reflective correspondents in the *Chronicle* showed a variety of responses to this news (8 March 1919: 115–118):

A gardener's calling forty years ago was considered a profession second to none among the working classes of this country; but to-day it holds out no attraction to lads and young men.

...gardeners cannot at present do a fair day's work and maintain their families at the wages which were customary before the year 1914.

During four and a half years of war, gardeners fought hard battles and won them. The younger men grasped the implements of war, the older men took up the garden tools, which many had laid aside, and also imparted that superior knowledge they possess to their fellow-countrymen, to enable them to cultivate the land and make it produce its maximum amount of food; their efforts did much more towards winning the war for our country than the ordinary individual may care to admit.

Fortunately, the hot-headedness and ignorance of the immutable laws of economics, which are endangering the future of certain other trades, are not likely to affect the calmness and soundness of judgment which experience has shown may be expected from those who avocations on the land bring them into daily touch with the laws of nature, whether their position be that of employer or employed.

(The "immutable laws of economics" were invoked frequently in the discussion of gardeners' wages in 1919.) The military analogy invoked above was elaborated by Mr Chivers:

Mr. Charles E. Pearson considers I spoil my case by asking full wages for employees at 18 years of age. I disagree with him, for my contention is that if a lad of 18 years is old enough to fight for his country and receives the same Army pay as the man of any other age, he is entitled to full wages and benefits in the labour world (29 March 1919: 157).

W. R. Dykes, soon to become the Secretary of the RHS, replied (19 April 1919: 196):

There is a fallacy concealed in *Mr. W.Chivers'* comparison of the lad of 18 in the garden and in the army. In the latter he can learn all that is necessary in a few weeks or months, provided that he is then efficiently commanded and led, but in the garden trees cannot profitably be pruned at the word of command nor will the order "As you were" restore a plant that has been killed by transplantation at

the wrong season of the year. A head gardener can control to some extent, but the mischief that can be done by the inexperienced is untold. Therefore there is no real comparison between the two.

Attempts were naturally made to involve the Royal Horticultural Society in the disputes. At the Council meeting of 17 December 1918,

A letter from Mr. Denman was read on the subject of gardeners wages [sic] and the general discontent prevailing amongst professional gardeners in South Wales. The Secretary was asked to reply that the Council regret that they cannot intervene between employers and their gardeners on the subject of wages, but that there is every anticipation that Gardeners wages [sic] will rise in sympathy with other local wages.

The RHS was being kept busy by the needs of its own returning staff, the construction of new cottages for its gardeners, the finances of recovering war allowances and of increasing salaries to keep in line with inflation. On 2 June 1919, Sir William Lawrence (soon to become the Society's Treasurer) proposed that "a meeting of employers, amateur and trade, and of gardeners should be held to discuss the question of their wages and working hours. The Secretary was asked to reply that the Council felt adverse to meddling with the matter." The Society's hands-off attitude was spelled out in more detail in the meeting of 4 November, in a response to Colonel Herman de Watteville (later to become known as the author of *The British Soldier*, but I have not ascertained the nature of his involvement in the gardeners' wages question, or what his proposals were): "Though the Council were in full sympathy with Colonel de Watteville as individuals, as members of the Council of a Society composed almost wholly of employers and of gardeners, they do not see their way to take any active part in the suggested organisation".

All through the course of 1919, correspondence about the appropriate pay for gardeners trickled through the pages of the *Gardeners' Chronicle* and of the *British Gardener*. William Watson once again invoked Kew as a standard: "The wages of all gardeners at the present time should be at least double what they were in pre-war days. As a matter of fact, in all Government parks and gardens they are this now. Thus at Kew journeymen gardeners before the war were paid 21s.; they are now paid 47s." (Watson, 1920).

The general secretary of the B.G.A. advertises that a new standard of wages and hours has been adopted, when he must know that he cannot enforce it. Till such time as this can be done it is not right to ask gardeners to subscribe to the funds of his association (*Gardeners' Chronicle*, 26 April 1919: 209).

Here is the B.G.A. recommendation for a national pay scale for gardeners, in its final version of August 1919:

Under 15 years of age	14s. per week
15 years of age	17s. per week
16 years of age	21s. per week
17 years of age	28s. per week
18 years of age	35s. per week
19 years of age	40s. per week
20 years of age	47s. per week
21 years of age and older	£3 per week minimum
First journeyman, leading hands & charge hands	£3. 3s. 0d. per week
Nursery, garden & park foreman, & single-handed gardeners	£3. 7s. 0d. per week
General foremen, landscape foremen, & stokers	£3. 10s. 0d. per week
Head gardeners & nursery managers	£3. 12s. 6d. per week
Superintendents, horticultural instructors & horticultural travellers	£260 per year
Day gardeners	1s. 4d. per hour
Day gardeners, if own tools used	1s. 6d. per hour
Overtime	Time & a half
Saturday afternoons, Sundays & public holidays	Double time
At least seven days' paid holiday per year	
All these rates based on a 44-hour working week	

Meanwhile, throughout the debate on wages, hints broke through of hopes for a more radical social transformation. One correspondent (*Gardeners' Chronicle*, 15 March 1919: 128) spoke of "millions of acres that are wasted on empty display in the form of parks, pleasure grounds and

such like private enclosures". H.J. Elwes responded (22 March 1919: 144) that "Such clap-trap as this might do in Glasgow or South Wales, but will not appeal to the gardeners of Great Britain – who, if I may judge from a very wide acquaintance amongst them, are as a rule not inclined to Socialism". Elwes proceeded to put the employers' case:

I believe that when private employers can choose between members of a trade union and free men, they will in nine cases out of ten prefer the free man. The war has taught us that we can do without many things which we had before, and be just as happy without them. With income tax at 6s. in the pound, and super-tax in addition, very few owners of large gardens will be able to spend as much as before on their gardens. It is also certain that the price of coal will keep many forcing-houses and plant-houses closed; and if wages continue at their present rate, it will simply mean that fewer gardeners can be employed in private and in Government establishments.

Elwes' final flourish was to recommend that Kipling's "Glory of the Garden" should be "hung in every bothy and potting-shed, for the benefit of young and old".

The British Gardeners' Association found itself experiencing the typical problems of trade unions, as one correspondent reported (*British Gardener*, March 1919, 11: 55): "I am afraid that a great many gardeners in this country do not join the B.G.A. as there is a fear among them that their employers will give them 'marching orders' if they discover that any of their men have joined a Trades Union". At their meeting of 3 January 1920 there was a discussion of "blacklegging" in gardening, with a denunciation of "railwaymen, gas-workers, and boot and shoe workers" for taking up gardening positions at low pay, "acting very unfairly by securing the eight-hour day and then making use of their spare time to undercut their fellow-workers' wages". At that point the position of the B.G.A. administration was to use "not direct action, but the surer weapon of boycotting" (*Gardeners' Chronicle*, 17 January 1920: 33). But increasing militancy over the course of the year seems to have eroded that stance.

Mr. Harding, in the Lea Valley district... gave a very strong hint to his hearers that if any difficulties occurred with employers it was open to them to throw half-bricks through the greenhouse. I do not know

whether this is one of the “conciliatory” methods mentioned in his letter to you (Pearson, 1920).

In January 1920, the Association was able to look back on its achievements: over £1,200 had been obtained from employers as wages due to staff; increases of wages amounting to £5,000 per week had been obtained; the horticultural staff of the Imperial War Graves Commission had joined. A couple of months later the British Gardeners’ Association officially changed its name to the National Union of Horticultural Workers, and its journal was retitled accordingly. The change was not welcomed by all. One longstanding member attacked the current administration for secrecy in not publishing the names of the Council members (Hartless, 1920: 159). Almost immediately after the change of name, pressure began building for the union to join the larger and more powerful agricultural workers’ union. Financial problems, already evident, continued. Back in 1919 members had been asked to contribute a penny per issue to help meet the costs of producing the journal. In February 1921 the *Journal of the National Union of Horticultural Workers* appeared in a new reduced format of four pages only, and the following month it was agreed that payment for it in future should be optional. This was in fact the last issue. And so it was up to the *Gardeners’ Chronicle*, on 12 March 1921 (p. 131), to report that the NUHW was being amalgamated into the National Union of Agricultural Workers. How many horticultural issues received attention during the course of that union’s existence I do not know; whenever horticulture and agriculture get thrown together, agriculture always comes out on top.

W. H. Divers had retired in 1917. The *Gardeners’ Chronicle* published a profile of him in 1922; neither in this nor in his obituary twenty years later was any reference made to the British Gardeners’ Association, which he had founded.

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Occasional Papers from the RHS Lindley Library: future issues

The announced *Occasional Paper* on Lindley has been postponed until 2015, the year of the sesquicentenary of Lindley's death.